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W. T. R. Powell.

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LOVE ME FOR MY LOVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"FLIRTS AND FLIRTS," "ONE FOOT ON SHORE."

"Everything in this world has its price, and the price buys *that*, not something else. Every harvest demands its own preparation, and that preparation will not produce another sort of harvest."—ROBERTSON'S SERMONS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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LOVE ME FOR MY LOVE.

CHAPTER I.

A STRANGE STORY.

THE sun's rays were sweltering down upon a little knot of people gathered together in the Regent's Circus, a little knot of people pressing round a prostrate form in the midst, a man pale and almost senseless, but who had still enough of strength left to gasp for "Air, air;" "Stand back, stand back," from an authoritative person among the crowd. Happily there is almost always one man in a crowd, who takes the lead. "Let the poor fellow have some room to breathe. Stand back, I say." And then as the little knot of

people fell back, and grew thinner, a man strode through the midst, and without looking where he was going, almost trod upon the poor senseless form stretched upon the pavement, and supported by the man who had before spoken. "Take care there, hold hard, I say;" and Sandy Beaumont, for it was he, held hard, and standing still looked about him, as if he were but now awoken from a dream. Indeed he was but now awoken. Then he bent down, and rendered what assistance he could to the poor sufferer, unloosening his cravat, pouring water upon him, and fanning him as best he could. The man looked like a miserable over-worked City clerk, who having had all the vitality drawn out of him by long confinement indoors, had then been sent out upon an errand and naturally enough had succumbed to the heat. There were lines of care on the pale face, and the light hair was prematurely streaked with grey, and

bald about the temples, but the saddest thing about him to Sandy's mind was to see his hands, so flaccid and nerveless, as if they had never done any manlier work than hold a pen through all the years the man had lived—not so many, poor fellow, after all, for he was evidently growing old before his time, one of the many victims to the overstrain of modern civilization. He opened his eyes after a little, and was then lifted into a cab by Sandy and the man, whom the latter had found playing the part of good Samaritan, and who now said he would go home with the poor fellow, asking where his home was. The clerk mentioned one of those dreary rows of recently built houses, like ugly funguses, the first occupants of a newly reclaimed plot of building ground, which go so far to make the immediate outskirts of London hideous. "But don't ask for my wife," he said, faintly; "she has been sadly ailing for a long while

now. Ask for Mary Jane, she is only thirteen, but she has great good sense, as the eldest of nine need to have, and she'll break it to her mother." Then the order was given to the cabman, and the cab moved off, and Sandy turned away with an indignant sickening at the heart. So that poor man had an ailing wife and nine children dependent on him. Why should he be struck down by the heat, instead of himself, Sandy Beaumont, whom nobody would miss, whom nobody depended upon? Why should not he die? instead of all those numbers of people, who were dying every day, and who would be so willing to live on, and whose lives were, as it seemed to him, so much more needed than his could possibly be by any one? Why should not he die, and thus keep up the average which otherwise must be maintained at the cost of some dearer life than his? But such thoughts were not natural to Sandy Beaumont: it was

not natural to him, who was so full of health and strength, to wish for death; and so he quickly turned himself away from such thoughts, and set himself to think how he might make his life more useful; and in the first place, ought he not to tell his aunt of her daughter's marriage to her cousin? her cousin, Lord Killowen! yes she will be glad to hear of it, thought Sandy bitterly, she wished her to marry her cousin, what does it matter which it is? The world will be equally pleased one way or the other, and Killowen is rather the best match of the two, I suppose. He is not so rich, but the title counts for something in the marriage market. I wonder how much though, now I should really rather like to know whether the world will decide she has chosen the best *parti* or not. Well anyhow there are not much odds—only to me, he added still more bitterly, and then he beckoned a hansom, and sprang into it.

When he arrived at Lady Killowen's door, he found a carriage waiting there, and the servant still in the same subdued tone, betokening a calamity in the household, informed him that her ladyship was just going out, and seemed doubtful about admitting him, but again Sandy brushed by him, and hurried up the stairs. He was anxious to have done with it all now; what he should do afterwards he did not know, but he felt as if he wished to wash his hands of the whole affair, and never hear his aunt's or his cousin's name again.

When he opened the sitting-room door, he did so with the full expectation of finding his aunt sitting still at her lacework; he was confused yet, and had not taken in that she was going out, and he had that opinion of his aunt, that he thought if the world were coming to an end, and the angel blowing the trumpet even in her ear, she would still go on working

at her lacework, until it was forcibly taken out of her hands. Thinking thus of his aunt, he did not fancy that any anxiety about her daughter could possibly draw her away from her constant occupation; but when he opened the door, Lady Killowen was not in the drawing-room, she was really going out, as the servant had said, and she had gone upstairs to put on her things, and in her place Sandy found his uncle, Tom O'Grady, and another man, tall and erect, and very gentlemanly looking, whom Sandy knew at once as by intuition to be his cousin, Lord Killowen, though owing to the divergence of their paths in life, they had never yet chanced to meet.

"Hollo, Sandy my boy, how are you? To think of your being back in England so soon!" And his uncle, Tom O'Grady, was almost shaking his hand off in his glad cordiality at seeing him.

"Yes, I have come back sooner than I intended," said Sandy without any answering cordiality, once more wearing that expressionless stolidity, which he had brought back with him from the bush.

"You must come and lunch with me to-day, my boy. You don't know all the ups and downs that have been going on, whilst you have been away. Who do you think is at my rooms now? You would never guess, but you must come and lunch with her, and all of us. We shall all be glad to see you, Sandy, my boy. You know your cousin, don't you?"

Sandy turned, and held out his hand, which Lord Killowen shook cordially.

"We have not had the pleasure of meeting before, but I am very glad now to have this opportunity of making your acquaintance," said the latter.

Sandy bowed his head slightly, in

acknowledgment, but without speaking, and Lord Killowen thought inwardly, "What bears men do become in Australia, to be sure!"

While Tom O'Grady went on, "And when did you come back, my boy?"

"I only arrived in England this morning."

"Ah, then you have heard nothing of course."

"I have just come from your rooms, where I saw my cousin. She told me of your marriage," he went on, turning to Lord Killowen; "I have known my cousin from a child, and I hope she will make you happy. I am sure you mean to do your best to make her so;" and he wrung Lord Killowen's hand in a manner to make the latter wince with pain. Perhaps this was fortunate, for it prevented him for the moment from seeing the expression that passed over Sandy's face as he spoke, passing very quickly, and then giving place to the same stolidity as before,

but revealing a good deal as it passed, had any one seen it, who could have understood it. However, Tom O'Grady was not quick at understanding things, and though when his nephew had first gone to Australia, he had decided that the sudden resolution to do so had something to do with Kathleen, he looked upon that as quite a thing of the past, seeing nothing had come of it, since Sandy had returned a rich man; and as to Lord Killowen, he was in too much pain for the moment to think anything, but "Confound these rich Australians, they treat one as if one was as robust as one of themselves. But it is all that bush life, I suppose, which makes them so rough. Now how badly that speech was turned. 'I hope' and 'I'm sure,' quite an inverted order, and it might have been made so neat."

And whilst he was thinking thus, Lady Killowen came down, and glanced anxiously at

her two nephews, as they stood side by side. Certainly, as far as appearances went, the balance seemed to be in Lord Killowen's favour, but Lady Killowen's eyes rested much more lovingly on the broad shoulders and fair sunburnt face of the one, than on the erect bearing and well cut regular features of the other.

Sandy Beaumont stepped forward at once to speak to her. "I did not know I should find my cousin here, or I would not have come to tell you what he has of course told you already."

"Yes, he has told me," said Lady Killowen, and she looked anxiously at Sandy.

"Now good-bye, aunt. You are going out I see, so I will not delay you."

"You will come and lunch with me," said Tom O'Grady. "I consider I am giving the wedding breakfast, only as it is an impromptu I dare not call it so, for fear the

results may not justify the name. But you will come, won't you?"

"Thank you, I'm afraid I have got business, which ——" said Sandy still going.

"Well, come and dine this evening."

"If I can possibly manage it," said Sandy, but he knew quite well he should not be able to manage it. It would be a long time before he would be able to enter that room again.

Just as he shut the door, Lady Killowen hurried after him, crying out "You have left your glove behind you." But this was only a pretext, for as soon as she had closed the door behind her, she said, "How did you leave her? Is it safe to go to her now, do you think?"

"Does she expect you?" asked Sandy, drearily.

"Oh, I was not thinking of myself; but, yes, she expects me, for Killowen

and poor Tom came to persuade me. I would not go at first, but she is my only child, and so at last——"

"Yes, yes," said Sandy; "I did not mean if she expected *you*—if she expected *him*. But of course she does, fool that I am. Yes, of course it is safe to go to her. Do you not know Kathleen, aunt, and did you ever know her fail whilst there was any one by to keep up appearances before?"

"She is her mother's own daughter in that," said Lady Killowen, and threw her arms round Sandy, and kissed him; but he rather shook himself loose, though he did not exactly repel her kiss; and then he went downstairs, and never once looked back, while Lady Killowen stood at the top of the stairs and watched him till she had to go back to her other nephew and to her brother-in-law.

"Yes; it is the same old story over again," she thought to herself. "Will it end the same, I wonder?" Then she thought of her daughter. "God grant it may be no worse," she added, hastily.

Meanwhile Sandy wandered out into the sun, and wandered on again, much as he had wandered before he had come upon the poor sun-stricken clerk; but his thoughts were different now. He wondered to himself why he was so miserable; how long was it since he had entertained the idea of making Kathleen his wife; that the impossibility of it should now make him so miserable. Would he not yesterday have been rejoiced to hear that she was going to marry Lord Killowen, or had he himself had some thoughts of her even then? Had he really loved her all these years, as he had told her but a short while ago, or had he quite ceased

to love her, as he had more than once told Lady Faversham, till on this unlucky morning he had heard that she loved him, and had at once begun to love her again with redoubled force!

He could not settle it, even to his own satisfaction; and mixed with these thoughts came thoughts of Kathleen too—not as the woman he loved and had hoped, but a a short while before, to make his wife—but as the cousin, whose welfare had always been a matter of great interest to him, and for which he could never cease to care, however much and however long they might be parted.

He had never met Lord Killowen before, the latter having always lived abroad, first for the purposes of education, and afterwards attached to one foreign embassy after another, till he had come into his title only a few years before. But though

Sandy had never met him till this morning he had taken his cousin's measure at once.

He thought he saw that Lord Killowen was a man so essentially conventional, that stripped of those conventionalities it was impossible to say what would be left of him. Indeed, it was to be feared that nothing would be left of him; that he might in the end turn out to have been all conventionality.

To such a man as this, Sandy knew how much it must have cost to make, as it were, a runaway match with his cousin. Yes, undoubtedly, he had been very generous, as Kathleen had said, to let her off the penitential interview with her mother, and subsequent going to St. George's, and all the rest of the wedding paraphernalia, which would probably be anything but trifling or insignificant to this man, so wedded to the conventionalists.

Being so generous to her, it was probable he had been very much in love with Kathleen; but how would such a man be likely to suit himself to her? He knew she did not love him when she married him—for Sandy could not but believe Kathleen about this. She had told him so, so positively, yet being so wedded to appearances he might perhaps be satisfied with the appearance of love; but how long would Kathleen be likely to keep that up? Sandy had told his aunt that Kathleen would never fail to keep up appearances as long as there was anybody by to observe whether she did so or not; but suppose, for some long time, there might be nobody by but those who were in the secret of her want of love for her husband, would she be likely to go on keeping up appearances then? and how would he take it if she did not?

Sandy had felt doubtful, while think-

ing of making her a wife to himself, as to how the transformation could be effected. Now, here was Lord Killowen going to undertake it with much less knowledge of Kathleen, and Sandy pondered over his chances of success.

He had wandered into the park, and finding himself there, had wandered on and on, seeking, almost unconsciously, for a shady spot in which to sit and think; but the promises of a shady resting place had disappointed him, as he drew nearer, one after another. Now, at last, he saw a bench under a really leafy tree, and being unoccupied, he hastened to take possession of it.

Many people passed through the park on that terribly hot day, for be the weather what it may, London must needs always sally forth on its business or its pleasure; it takes no siestas like the lazy southern

towns. And as they passed, many people lazily wondered what that bronzed and bearded man was thinking of, sitting so still through that September afternoon. But Sandy took no count of them, and what he saw with his eyes went no further, it conveyed no impression to his mind.

At last he was startled by a sudden, piteous cry, almost a howl, and, looking up, he saw a little girl in a perambulator, which he then recollected having seen a nursemaid wheel into the shade, but a few minutes before, and then hurry away, evidently on some errand of her own. The child had sat very quiet at first, playing with a doll, which looked almost like her diminutive sister, with the same flaxen hair and the same wide blue eyes; but then it had become suddenly conscious that it was left alone in the world; no one anywhere in sight, except this strange gentleman,

so it had set up that piteous cry that had awoke Sandy from his thoughts.

He looked up annoyed, and for a moment or two watched the child, wondering, as it were, when it would leave off crying; but he had always been fond of children, and the child did not leave off crying, so having looked vainly round for the nurserymaid, who was nowhere in sight, he got up, after a moment or two, and drawing the perambulator alongside of himself, began to talk to the little girl, and admire her doll and make friends with her. After a few minutes she pushed her tiny fists into her staring blue eyes, and with them brushed the tears away, and began to make friends with him in her turn. Indeed, she seemed to be of a very communicative turn, though, unfortunately, she did not yet speak plainly enough for Sandy to gather much from the long confidences she poured out to him.

At last the maid appeared hurrying up, and looking very guilty indeed, as she saw this strange gentleman with the little girl upon his knees, both apparently quite old friends.

Sandy Beaumont looked at her sternly, and holding out his watch for her to see, said,

"You have been absent exactly three quarters of an hour."

"Oh, sir, not so long I think," replied the girl, "I only went round the corner to speak to my brother, and I was detained."

"You may have been detained, but you did not go round the corner to speak to your brother," said Sandy, still more sternly than before. Then as the girl began to cry, he said, "Don't cry, but tell me at once what did you go to do?"

"I went to speak to my sweetheart, sir," said the girl, still sobbing. "He is going

across to France to-morrow, and he has been told wicked tales of me, and oh, if you have ever loved any one, sir, you will know how bad it feels to be misjudged."

"I daresay it does feel very bad," said Sandy, slowly; then after a pause, "Did you make it up with him?"

"Yes sir, he says he'll never believe no more tales of me, not till I tell him them myself. Oh, you won't tell my mistress of me, sir; I never did so before, indeed I never did, and I won't again, only it did feel so dreadful bad."

"I daresay. I am glad you have made it up," said Sandy, slowly, "but mind, you must never leave your little charge alone again. Mind that, and be a good girl, and I hope you will have no more misunderstanding with your sweetheart. Now, good-bye, little one, it is time for you and me to part," and he lifted the child into the perambulator,

but she held up her little arms, and rosy mouth, for "one little kiss," as she said, and then she said good-bye to him, quite contented, having found her nurse again.

"She is a good girl, I see," said Sandy, looking round at the two after he had walked a few steps; "the child seems so fond of her, and she appeared very sorry. I daresay she never had left it before. I hope she won't again. Pretty little girl, I wonder whose child she is, and what will become of her."

Whilst he was thus idly thinking a carriage passed him rapidly, but Sandy did not notice it, nor that the gentleman driving it turned sharply round on catching sight of him, and drew up quickly. A moment after an arm was passed through his, and looking up he saw the hateful features of the Count Manfredi.

"*Eh, mon cher, comment va-t-il? charmé de vous revoir.*"

"Pardon me, Count, but I cannot return the compliment," and Sandy shook off his companion's arm, and standing a little apart, looked him haughtily in the face.

The Count smiled one of those surface smiles, wholly inexpressive of gladness or anything pleasurable, unless perhaps it is the sort of smile the demons wear while contemplating the fall of one of the children of earth. "*Eh, mon cher*, but who then should be friends if your father's son and I were not? Our common love is surely a common bond?" The Count could not have spoken thus lightly of his wife, when he and Sandy had last met, but his wife had died since then, and many things had happened, or let us rather say he had himself advanced upon the path he was even then following. As life goes on we all of us come to do things we could not once have done. "Besides, you owe me a debt now, you should be glad

to meet me again, for there are some debts that it is a pleasure to pay. Eh, Monsieur Sandy!"

"I do not understand you, Count."

"You were one happy boy, when I first had the supreme felicity to make your acquaintance. Are you one happy boy now? Eh, Monsieur Sandy, you understand, I think," and the Count smiled again.

"Yes, I understand you, Count. You mean to say that you did me an injury when we last met, but I deny it. I say that you did me no injury then, though you had the will to do it; of that there is no doubt."

"And have I done you no injury now either? Do you not regret that you did not arrive in England one short twenty-four hours sooner? Eh, M. Sandy? Ah, but I see you look abashed, you Englishmen have a beautiful regard for truths, which never allows you to be consistent in your

lies. *Croyez moi*, they are not in your *métier*, you should not attempt them, but should leave them to us whose *rôle* they are. *Voyons*, let us talk as friends, since it seems we are not enemies;" and again the Count passed his arm through Sandy's, but Sandy shook it off more angrily than before.

"The disposition is enough to make men foes," he cried. "You could not be more my enemy, if you had blasted my life's happiness."

"*Merci* for the supposition. It may not be so far from the truth after all. Listen to me, Monsieur Sandy, did you not hear I was going to marry your cousin?"

"Yes, I did," said Sandy, very reluctantly.

"And why have I not? Tell me that, *mon bon garçon*."

"Because she would not have you," was the reply, given very stoutly. He did not know why he stopped to talk to this man,

whose very presence was hateful to him, but there was a strange power about the Count Manfredi, which often obliged those, who were most unwilling to be so, to become to all appearance his friends. We not seldom see this power among foreigners, or among Englishmen brought up abroad, very seldom among Englishmen, *pur sang*, and who have been brought up in England. The Count Manfredi possessed it to a singular extent—some people would have called it fascination, if so, it was fascination of a very deadly kind. He laughed out now a low rather musical laugh, though with a sort of hollow rattle in it, and equally joyless as his smile.

"Because she would not have me. *Eh, mon cher*, and you believe that. She would have sprung into my arms, if I had wished it; but I did not. Because she would not have me! eh, but it was I who would not have her. Nay, look not so fierce, *mon*

cher, ca n'a pas de tout l'air joli, and affrights me not in the least degree. You dare not strike me. Nay, look here," he cried, turning up his sleeve a little, just so as to show an arm yellow and wasted in the extreme, on the bone of which the skin seemed to hang loosely, without any intervening flesh. "You dare not strike a man with an arm like that; and should you wish for a duel, which I know you too well to fancy, it would be easy enough for me, who have but at the most a few short weeks to live, to send you before me to explore that eternity of which those good father abbés tell such strange tales. Bah, you know it as well as I do, but this is not the land for duels; and you see you could not strike me, a weak man, at death's door: it would be what you, with your absurd English notions, would call cowardly, so you need not try to affright me with your fierce looks. Come now, listen

to me amiably. I have a story to tell you.

"Tell it then," said Sandy, "I shall not interrupt you;" and he folded his arms and stood erect opposite the Count, prepared to listen to what he had to say. "But make it as short as you can," he added, "for it is no pleasure to me to listen to you."

Then Count Manfredi leant in an easy attitude upon the railing. "*Eh bien*, but you are *grossier*," he said. "You have not improved your manners in the other hemisphere, let me tell you, *mon bon*, *M. Sandy*. But to commence: You were a happy boy when I first knew you at Ryde, and you were in love with your *belle cousine*, but she saw me, and at once she returned to her early allegiance, for she had loved me before. I thought of marrying her then—I have never thought of it since; but I had a wife already, a trifling objection, and then though

you did me the honour to regard me with an unalterable dislike even from the first, I fancied I should not pain you sufficiently by marrying her myself, so I looked about for somebody more visibly worthless—more really so, it would be difficult to find—and I hit upon the amiable M. Simpson; then having made love to the adorable Kathleen, just sufficiently to render her utterly desperate, I threw this *bon garçon* in her way, and knowing them bound to one another, left Ryde, happy in my success. How could I know that you—what the devil possessed you, I wonder—would start off for Australia, like the hero in a melodrama, or that the spiritual M. Simpson would choose a romantic ending. But, anyhow, you did not come back when you heard of it, and somehow, *mon cher*, I was not disturbed by any thoughts of your radiant happiness. Then, still like the hero of a melodrama—who

would ever have thought from your appearance that you were so theatrically inclined—*you return* from Australia, with a fortune and without a wife. I hear of it through *un jeune* M. Beauclerc, more talkative than any woman, and whom, meeting at some baths, I have rightly judged to be *épris* of the adorable Kathleen. I write to him nominally about a bet between us, which bet was entirely a creation of my own imagination, but which he with an amiability that does him credit, takes to be a matter of fact. He tells me all I desired to know, and more, that you are come home with a fortune, that your beautiful cousin is more beautiful than ever, and that he is going to stay with you both in the same country-house. I hasten to England, almost fearing to be too late, but soon I find my good fortune has not deserted me. The beautiful Kathleen returns, justly outraged by a want

of appreciation on the part of one whom we need not name. I see that all goes well, but I dare not trust it to itself; she is refusing a brilliant *parti* to whom she cannot possibly have any objection, though he may be a little *ennuyeuse*, but what does that matter in matrimony? I judge that she is in love with somebody; that somebody has cared for her once, probably cares for her still, though he may not choose to show it at first, he is rich, both are free. What should hinder these two from being happy? *Le voilà*," and the Count smiled again; he had been speaking very fast in his easy flowing French, so fast that Sandy, who was out of practice, had had much difficulty in following his meaning, but now at this pause a cough shook him violently, and pressing his hand to his side, he went on more slowly, and with less gesticulation, but all the time, keenly, carefully noting what impression his

words might make upon Sandy. As yet it was hard to see that they had made any.

Sandy stood with his arms folded, looking at him calmly and contemptuously, as much as to say, "I have given you my word that I will listen, and I will, though your story is perfectly uninteresting, and in nowise my concern."

The Count went on. "I saw your cousin unhappy, a fit of compassion seized me, and I made myself her consoler—I dried the beautiful eyes, and then in an access of enthusiam, I offered her my hand. *A la bonne heure* see arrive the mother and the cousin, not you, my good friend, no the *bon Dieu* was good to me, and detained you in Norway; but the other,—he was cold and proud, *milady* simply furious. I press my beauty to my beating heart." The Count paused and looked at Sandy even more intently than before, but the latter did not move a muscle, so he con-

tinued: "I expect she will fly with me at once, and trust herself to my protection from that very hour, but no, a fit of your English prudence seizes upon her at last, and she will go to her uncle. *Eh bien*, so much the better, I did not wish to marry her, only to make it impossible for you to do so. I visit her at her uncle's; I make myself odious to her; I claim *all* the rights of a *fiancé*, yes, all," he repeated, but this time he barely glanced at his hearer, evidently expecting to find him as stolid as before. "Even the brave Miss O'Grady is frightened; she thinks she has gone too far. I see I have made my game, she is too proud to go back to her mother; her uncle is no good; she must throw herself upon the protection of somebody—I feel persuaded it will be a man, and that man she must marry. It matters not to me, who it is, so long as it is not yourself, and you I believe to be in Norway; still you may hasten

home, as you have done, *mon cher*," this with a neat little bow. "I make myself still more odious; I pretend to powers I do not possess. She sends for Lord Killowen, and *c'est fait*, I apologize; lay all to the effects of fever, and insist on being present at the ceremony. I even follow them home again, and just as *milor* drives away to tell *milady*, I have the inexpressible satisfaction of seeing you drive up to the door. I only regret that I missed you as you came out; but we have met at last, and it is a real pleasure to me to contemplate your happiness. Now, do you still assert I have done you no injury?"

You have told me a very well constructed story," said Sandy, gravely. "It might not be easy for me to invent such another; but to a person of your imagination, I can fancy it would not be difficult—especially *after* the events."

"You insinuate that you do not believe me."

"Hardly that, Count. I am, as you are fond of saying, an Englishman, and not much given to insinuating anything. But I know of old, that you love well to play the part of Mephistopheles, and where you cannot do that, to pretend that you have done so. This long narration must have tired you; you seem scarcely so vigorous as of old, allow me to recommend you to return to your carriage."

"Lend me your arm then so far, I am too feeble to walk much alone. Nay, you cannot deny such a service to a dying man."

But Sandy could deny it, he beckoned to the carriage, and advancing a few steps called loudly to the man to bring it nearer, at last he caught his attention and the carriage drove up to where they were standing.

"Allow me to return you my sincere thanks for your extreme *bonté*. I regret that it should have been necessary, but my voice

is hardly so powerful as of old, and long speaking rapidly exhausts me," said the Count Manfredi with the most courteous of bows. He was changed and wasted away, as Sandy saw clearly now, though at first the perfect get up, and indifferent easy manner had blinded him to the Count's altered appearance. Even to the end, though asserting it in words, he tried still to contradict in action the now too evident breaking up of his health, for he sprang lightly and with all the affectation of a man of fashion into the carriage that was waiting him, gathering up the reins with an easy nonchalance, and then just turning round to bestow a little parting nod upon his companion, while his large black eyes gleamed with a malicious pleasure ; but Sandy had already turned, and was walking on in the opposite direction, so this last insolence was lost upon him.

Only as he recalled the Count Manfredi's

hollow cheeks, like yellow parchment except for the hectic flush that had grown deeper, and deeper, as he talked, and as he recalled the large black eyes, even brighter in their lurid brilliance than of old, and the yellow wasted arm that the Count had exhibited to him for a moment, he wondered once or twice in the course of the following fortnight, that he saw no notice of his death in the papers, but he did not—no one ever did, nor was there any notice of his leaving England in the columns of the "Morning Post," which might have accounted for what otherwise seemed as if it must have been an omission on the part of the daily papers.

About this time there was a mysterious murder, one of those inexplicable mysteries which nobody ever succeeds in unravelling, and about which a good deal is said and written, when they take place in the dead time of the year, such as the month of

September, when everybody is busy killing partridges, or in some other fashion killing time, and no one has either leisure or inclination to do anything wise enough for the papers to write staid leading articles about, till they are driven to take the sensational, and no blame to them; the public is like a hungry family crying for its accustomed food, and the impoverished press has no food to give it, so must dish up what it can.

The murder of which it wrote so much just at this time, was hardly a very horrible one, but very mysterious, quite sufficiently so to be exciting, without the additional piquancy of any horrors. One day a hat in good condition, likewise a pair of boots, likewise a coat and pair of trowsers, both the latter with money in the pockets, and all in no ways of foreign make, but otherwise remarkable, were discovered in a shed abutting on the Thames, hidden away in an empty

cask. There was no mark by which to discover their owner; they could not have been taken off for the purpose of bathing, for then some other clothes would have been found with them; they could not be the results of a theft, for then though the clothes might possibly have been hidden for a while, the money would have surely been abstracted at once.

A few days after a fresh mystery was discovered—a body was picked up in the Thames, stark naked, and headless; it was much wasted away, but from the state in which it was found, little else could be pronounced of it with any certainty. It was impossible to identify it, and no one ever appeared to claim it. Great pains were taken to ascertain who had suddenly disappeared, but though many people seemed to have done so, an alarmingly large number indeed, yet no one of these could, as it appeared, have

been the owner of the clothes found; nor could any traces be discovered of the murderer of the headless man. "The Times" had several leading articles on the subject, but nothing came of it; only the police were called over the coals as usual.

"That is quite the way I could fancy the Count Manfredi disappeared," said Kathleen to her husband, after reading one of these articles. "He is just the man to have many secret enemies."

"Quite so. It is really a pity that it should not be the Count. Few people could be so well spared," replied Lord Killowen; and Kathleen went on with the paper. Yet she recollected perfectly, the time when she had been wildly in love with this man, of whom they thus spoke; and barely a fortnight ago, she had been engaged to become his wife.

CHAPTER II.

WHY AND BECAUSE.

KATHLEEN never finished that letter on which she had been engaged when Sandy Beaumont entered the room. She had been writing to Sybil, to acquaint her friend with her recent marriage, thinking that she owed her an early announcement of it, if only in gratitude for the great anxiety Sybil had lately expressed about her future. "She will be glad of it—rather," Kathleen had thought to herself, as she had sat down to write to Lady Faversham. "Yes, I have certainly so managed that every one who knows me will be glad to hear of my marriage to Killowen." And then Sandy came in, and after he had

gone, Kathleen thought no more that everyone would be glad to hear of her marriage; she felt as if no one in the world could have any right to be glad about it, and she had no heart to go on with her half-finished note. "Sybil will hear of it quite soon enough, through the papers," she thought to herself; and having torn her note into little bits, she flung herself upon the sofa, and buried her face among the cushions.

Kathleen's thoughts were very different from Sandy's; she indulged in no retrospections into past years; she did not dare to think of the future; she lay there, and thought of Sandy—nothing but Sandy—gloating over his various perfections, and longing, madly longing, for that kiss which he had denied her. "It was because he loves me so much though," she said to herself. "He is so kind generally, he could not have denied such a little thing as that to any

woman, except the woman he loved better than all the world." And poor miserable Kathleen hugged herself in that delicious thought—the only gleam of happiness among all the dismal dreariness around her. But it would neither be profitable, nor altogether desirable, to follow Kathleen in her meditations of that morning—ravings as they were, although unexpressed in words. Let us rather look back a little and see, as Kathleen had no longer the clearness of perception left to her to see what had induced her to take that day's fatal step.

Kathleen, very richly gifted by nature, and with a charm of fascination that even surpassed her loveliness, had started in life with as brilliant prospects as it was really possible for a girl to start with. The only daughter of an Irish Viscount, possessed of a small but wonderfully little encumbered estate; she had been sufficiently raised above the

common herd, for any merits that she might possess, to be enabled to shine out easily; yet without being so much elevated as to be subject to that attendant penalty on grandeur—the paucity of equals, and consequent almost necessary intercourse with inferiors, too apt by their servility to foster the faults of those of their superiors, who condescend to mix with them, or almost more detrimental to a daring and naturally untrained mind, the total deprivation of intercourse with beings of like kind.

Kathleen's position was hardly grand enough to expose her to either of these evils to any great extent, yet sufficiently grand to procure her a good *entrée* into any society, and thus give her increased facilities for making a choice as to her friends. Besides these advantages, she was in nowise deficient in ability; naturally brilliant, it is impossible to say what cultivation might not have made

of her talents, for they had received absolutely none; she was by nature, frank, generous, and possessed of a noble magnanimity, a far rarer gift among women than among men. With these qualities, counterbalanced by a hot temper, a too great sociability, and perhaps, also, too large capacity for pleasure, she had started in life; and what had she made of it? or, rather, should we not say, what had life made of her? for Kathleen had never attempted any guidance of herself, and from her earliest years, had given herself up an easy prey to the course of events around her, only breaking out into some violent outburst, when they went adverse to her wishes; and then, forgetting her anger, in a headlong pursuit of some pleasure, that chance seemed to throw within her reach.

Her mother never trained, though she often scolded her; but as Kathleen was quick

enough to see, that notwithstanding these scoldings, her mother loved her passionately, as much for her faults as for her virtues, she soon learnt to regard the scoldings very little, only looking upon them as disagreeables, which must be allowed to take their course, and formed the chief "drawback in mother's character."

Her father, she was early taught to despise, yet she loved him notwithstanding, much as many a child sees merits in her old wooden doll, even in comparison with its newer waxen sisters, or lavishes her caresses upon some well-known mastiff that she is confident will submit to any treatment at her hands. Sandy, Kathleen had at first despised also as a rough unprepossessing schoolboy, gradually she had discovered that he was not quite so rough as he had at first sight appeared, and from that she gradually went on, till she at ast looked upon him as an embodiment of

all the virtues; but she still considered him very stupid and plain, and anything but what a girl ought to be. As to taking him for an example, that never entered into her thoughts. Why, she knew that Sandy himself considered her perfect; now she knew no one who considered him so, unless perhaps it was herself, so that no idea of modelling herself upon him ever presented itself to her.

An only daughter, Kathleen did not recollect the time at which she had not been what young ladies call *out*. Though what is meant by this phrase it is daily becoming more difficult to discover, perhaps because everyone is *out* in this enlightened age. Certainly Kathleen had always been so, she had always been accustomed to be admired and made much of, and whatever attentions were paid her, she was never trained to repress, but rather taught to develop. She was encou-

raged to be fast; she was encouraged to be silly; she was encouraged to look upon those people around her, who were trying to lead good lives, as hypocrites, who loved to make a parade of virtue, and by this parade, indemnified themselves for the deprivations of other kinds of pleasure, which the pursuit of virtue rendered unattainable; while at the same time she was encouraged to look upon those others, who were avowedly leading vicious lives, as unfortunate, most certainly, but probably possessed of great intrinsic virtues, which they were too modest to make a show of in the eyes of the world.

With this training, placed exactly in such circumstances as those in which Kathleen had been placed, another girl might perchance have grown up conscientious, truthful, and unselfish, but then it must have been a girl of quite another stamp. Now Kathleen had been perfectly self-satisfied from her baby-

hood upwards; of late, indeed, she had taken to violent self revilings, but then of late she had grown so very double, that it was impossible to say when she spoke, what she thought, or what she did not. The habitual disregard of truth brings with itself this punishment, slowly perhaps, but very surely, and many years cannot pass before the deceiver of others becomes the self-deceived. Whether Mohammed be or be not the great historic exemplar of this species of self deceit, certainly Kathleen O'Grady had become a very striking example of it in her smaller sphere, before she married Lord Killowen. Kathleen had told her uncle that she had quarrelled with her mother, because Lady Killowen had used such language towards the man she intended to marry, as would make it, she thought, contemptible in her to remain in her house any longer, but in her secret heart she knew that she had long

been seeking a cause of quarrel with her mother. She had persuaded herself, by dint of long thinking of him in his absence, that she loved her cousin Sandy, though she had never loved him in his presence, nor ever at once after his going away. She had grieved very bitterly at the time, because though she did not love him, she was fonder of him than almost any one, and she knew, she had wronged him cruelly, and that Sandy would be sure to feel it deeply. Besides Mr. Simpson's terrible death, happening just about the same time had more to do with her grief than Lady Killowen had ever been willing to acknowledge. The Count Manfredi, the man who up to that time had most captivated Kathleen's young fancy, had but a short while before deserted her shamelessly, having first almost entrapped her into an avowal of her love for himself. Kathleen felt very miserable, and for the first time in her

life abased in her own eyes; half her troubles would have been removed, if Sandy could but have come back, and she felt that even if they had not been removed, his presence alone would have been an inexpressible comfort to her. By degrees she persuaded herself that she was in love with him, and endowed the absent Sandy with nearly every imaginable grace, as well as every imaginable virtue. Thus thinking of him, she compared every man who offered to her, with her ideal Sandy, and remained single for his sake as it were. She knew he had once loved her better than any of the men who professed to do so, and she thought he could not possibly have ceased to love her. Surely if ever a nature was calculated not to change, it was that of her cousin Sandy. At last he came back to England, and neither wrote to her nor sought to see her; she concluded at once that she had pained him even more than she had ever

fancied, but only the more did she determine one day to become his wife. Then came the invitation to Faversham, to stay in the same house with him; and Kathleen went down prepared to make any sacrifice, but at any cost, be it what it might, resolved to win back Sandy Beaumont's love. To her surprise she found herself powerless to make even the slightest impression upon him; had he met her again as her lover, once rejected, but still constant, she might perhaps have been touched by such devotion, but she would certainly, sooner or later, have found out that he was neither so brilliant nor so handsome as many of the men whom she had of late so contemptuously compared with him. But now finding that he despised her, seeing him so heart whole as to be even ready to make love to another girl, she maddened in her love, she was almost glad to leave Faversham, she felt herself growing so desperate. Again

and again did she ask herself, why she failed to please Sandy now, it was not because she was less beautiful than of old, it was not because she was less fascinating, it must be because he saw she was no longer worthy of his love. She told herself that she was not, not even so worthy of it as she had been of old, and she writhed as she thought this, and again asked herself to what this deterioration in her character was due. As often as she did so, she told herself that it was to her mother it was due—to her mother, who had set her hardly the highest example of what a woman should be; to her mother, who had encouraged her to be fast, and to collect fast men about her; to her mother, who had always laughed down any scruples about right and wrong, that Kathleen herself might once have entertained. It was very easy to lay the blame upon her mother, and in some measure it was a relief, anyhow it was one

of which Kathleen was very ready to avail herself, but in so doing she learnt to hate her mother. She knew her mother loved her, and if she had injured her, had at least never done so knowingly, but Kathleen would not take account of this now. Unfortunately all this time her mother alternately bantered her and found fault with her in a manner very trying to any girl of spirit, and though she had had much to crush her, when it came to the point Kathleen had still as high spirit as ever. She longed to quarrel with her mother, but she disdained to do so about any of the petty details of everyday life; at last a grand *motif* came, and Kathleen hastened to avail herself of it.

She no longer cared for the Count Manfredi: it was no spark of love for him that animated her in her quarrel with her mother; but she had long sought a cause for quarrel, and in her mother's conduct

towards her she thought she had found a cause that she need not be too proud to avow. Only after she had done so did Kathleen discover how completely she had placed herself in the Count's power by the step she had taken. Tom O'Grady was weaker and more incompetent than she had ever imagined him; and the Count, she soon found, possessed his old mysterious power over her, besides being more deeply read in wickedness than when last she had known him. She could not hide this from herself; she did not even try to do so, but she told herself that she was compromised with him now, and that she must marry him, though she shuddered at the thought. Each day his caresses became more simply hateful to her, and she almost fancied that he sought to make them so. At last she would bear them no longer, and she appealed to Lord Killowen. She told him he had

said he loved her, would he give her his protection now?

Lord Killowen was a man governed by the proprieties, and he told her that since she had left her mother's roof, he could now only protect her as her husband. It was all quickly settled. Lord Killowen was not a man of many words; he made no loving protestations, he only gave utterance to one or two of his usual well-turned sentences, expressing how long ago he had decided she was the woman he would prefer out of all others to adorn his house, and declaring that the present arrangement suited him admirably.

Kathleen knew that they could not possibly suit him, that they must indeed, to a certain extent, be peculiarly distasteful to him; but she thought it wiser not to put this knowledge into words, and they were married next morning. Lord Killowen had

previously explained, that having taken for the time a disgust to Killowen Castle, in great measure consequent upon her refusal to share its splendour with him, he had but a few days before accepted a post in connexion with the Embassy at Constantinople; and Kathleen had assured him in her turn, that this would suit her admirably, and that she thought, to be in any way connected with an embassy, was the thing in the world to which she was best suited. They had then decided that it would be wisest to make the journey to Constantinople serve as their honeymoon trip, only stopping a little in Paris for Kathleen to purchase the *trousseau*, for which there was now no time before the marriage. She had then promised—this in order to please Lord Killowen—that she would see her mother as soon as she had once become his wife; and he—to oblige her—had promised

also that they should start for Paris the very day of the wedding.

These arrangements having been very briefly discussed, and finally settled, Kathleen had remarked, sentimentally, that she was glad to be going abroad in the first instance—

"For if I went to Killowen at once, I should fancy myself a girl again. I do not want to go there till I have fully realized that I am your wife, then there will be more chance of beginning a different and a better life. And, indeed, some improvement is sadly wanted, I fear," she said, and sighed.

Lord Killowen gallantly assured her that he saw no room for improvement, and then gracefully withdrew to make needful preparations, as he said.

Kathleen also had preparations to make, and, besides this, she had to break to Tom

O'Grady that it was Lord Killowen she wished to marry, and not the Count Manfredi; and that in marrying her cousin she would really be following out her own wishes. To make this clear to him she found very difficult. Her next task was somewhat easier, though she approached it with far more trepidation. She had not yet broken with the Count Manfredi, and, before she knew what was happening, he was shown in upon her and her uncle.

For a moment Kathleen's courage failed her, but only for a moment; then she saw her trepidation was uncalled for, the game was taken out of her hands; and, as usual, the Count was master of the situation. He began at once by saying that he had understood from her cousin, Lord Killowen, that she regretted her engagement with himself; he should have preferred to receive such tidings from her own lips, rather than from

any third person, as then the sweetness of the lips would have robbed the words of half their bitterness. But might he now ask when she intended to marry Lord Killowen? When he heard she intended to marry him next day, he expressed perfect satisfaction.

"You have chosen wisely, *cara mia*," he said. "Antonio di Manfredi has but a short while to live, neither is he the man to wish to conceal those lovely features beneath the widow's veil in return for all the happiness which they have afforded him in this life. Rather will he go down to his grave your humble *serviteur;* and since I cannot have the supreme felicity of being united to you myself, allow me to have the still too great honour of beholding you made happy by another."

He then inquired the church and hour at which the marriage was to take place; and

having promised to be in attendance, left Kathleen perfectly stupified. As soon as she had shaken off her astonishment, she had again to begin her explanation to the now more than ever bewildered Tom O'Grady. He had fancied himself assisting true love against a tyrannical parent, he now began to fear that he had himself been the tyrant, and that but for him, the true love, if indeed there were any, would have ended happily long before.

Truly Kathleen had but little time in which to regret her engagement to Lord Killowen before her marriage, even if she had been so inclined, but afterwards it was a different matter; still it was with a very fairly composed appearance that she went forward to greet her mother, when she at last appeared, accompanied by Lord Killowen and Tom O'Grady. Lady Killowen—we must still call her so, for old custom's sake,

though already she had descended to the rank of dowager—was indeed far more overcome than her daughter.

"I hope you will be happy, Kathleen," she said, kissing her daughter, with a more choky feeling in her throat than Lady Killowen had felt for years.

"I hope so, I'm sure, mother," said Kathleen, returning the kiss, and then glancing at her husband, with a look that seemed to say, "I'm sure it will be my fault if I am not." It was a very finished wifely look, wonderfully finished, considering how little opportunity she had yet had to practice any expression of the kind, and all Kathleen's behaviour during the rest of that interview, was very like it—all wonderfully finished. A little subdued, just sufficiently agitated for the colour to come and go a trifle more frequently than was usual to her, and never to bloom *quite* so brightly as was its wont;

very loving to her mother, almost reverential to her husband, playfully affectionate towards her uncle.

Lady Killowen could not enough admire her daughter. "She will do," she said to herself. "Kathleen has got it in her. She has too much pluck to break down now." Nevertheless she felt very anxious, and as she got no opportunity of speaking to her alone—Kathleen, as she saw, purposely avoided this—she could not help whispering once more, as she pressed her daughter in a parting embrace, "I hope you will be happy, Kathleen."

For a moment Kathleen's face changed; no one could see it then but her mother. She did not answer, but a long drawn kiss expressed more than words could have told at that moment. "Write to me often, mother," she said, and a sob almost cut short this last speech; then she was led away by Lord

Killowen, looking rather downcast, as brides mostly do look, but smiling at him through her tears. Lady Killowen saw this smile, and she loved Kathleen more than ever. "She is my own daughter," she said to herself; "oh, how things come round again!" It seemed a little strange to her to be left alone with Tom O'Grady after that, but no one, looking at the hard worn face from which lines of care and worldliness had long ago effaced all the once resplendent beauty, would ever have guessed how sentimental Lady Killowen felt just then. She gave no utterance to her feelings, but shook hands with Tom O'Grady, in the manner of every-day friendliness, after he had handed her into her carriage, and then she drove away, and returned to her solitary home, from which Kathleen's bright presence had now really gone for ever.

Lady Killowen felt very melancholy.

CHAPTER III.

COSMO BEAUCLERC.

"Come by all means, old man, if you are not afraid of being moped to death. This child is all alone, and precious seedy; will be going off the hooks soon, I suppose, so you must not look for any larks. Call at Poole's for a parcel for me, will you? I shall be saved carriage then. You will be thinking I must indeed be down in the mouth to be considering small economies, but the coin is all right, thank my stars." Thus, and more to the same effect, wrote Cosmo Beauclerc, to whom Sandy had offered his company for a time; wondering how the little fellow was going on, and doubting whether he were properly cared for. It seemed now, that he was not.

"I can't understand that mother of his; what kind of woman can she be?" thought Sandy Beaumont, as he took the train down to Holyhead. "Never to have gone to the little fellow, when he is dying, and her only son too!"

But in this Sandy was mistaken. Mrs. Beauclerc had at once joined her son, when he had at first written to her from Dublin; just before Sandy himself had started for Norway. She had joined him, full of a mother's anxiety, and desirous now to do her duty by her son, just as she had once been desirous to do her duty by her husband, when she had married him for love, and before she had discovered her mistake in him. She found poor little Cosmo very low, and for the first time in his life inclined to think seriously, and asking himself what good he had done in all the years he had lived, and whether he deserved to live any longer. And all the

mother's heart in the clever, fanciful, unprincipled Mrs. Beauclerc was roused, and she could not bear that her son, her only son, should die, or think of dying.

She tried to turn his thoughts in some other direction; had not she often heard it said that, when people desponded of themselves, then indeed their friends might give up all hope for them. She must save her son's life for him; then, when he was well and strong again, it would be time enough for him to grow good, and she would do all for him that she ought to have done long ago. She had been a bad mother to him, she knew it now with a sort of agonized aching at the heart; she had not fitted her son for heaven, so she must win him back to earth for a little longer; she must gain for her son time for repentance and amendment, anyhow she must gain that—anyhow. So she poured out

his medicines for him, and shook up his pillows, and did all that lay in her power to distract his thoughts from what she considered the melancholy subjects on which they had of late learnt to dwell. And she succeeded; Cosmo ceased to think that he was dying, or to think of death indeed at all: it became to him once more an abstraction, a thing to frighten children with, no longer a reality—the reality, in comparison with which all things had but a short while before grown to seem insignificant and fictitious. And one day, when his mother had as usual left him for her daily drive—she considered this her duty, that she might pick up some news to amuse her son on her return—the little fellow feeling better than usual, and very dull in spite of his mother's well meant efforts to entertain him, called his valet, and throwing aside his dressing-gown, insisted on being got up in all his last new finery. Then, even

more dressed to death than usual, with his ghastly leaden face, and eyes which the film of death was already beginning to glaze, he sallied forth to one of the numerous bands, that go so far towards enlivening Dublin, and where he appeared like a ghost amongst the gay society that had known him so well but a little time before, but had already learnt to look upon him as gone for ever from its numbers. If he were a ghost, it soon appeared he was a very talkative, and amusing ghost; indeed, it almost seemed as if he were under some spell to go home directly he left off talking, and as if he did not at all want to go home, so ceaselessly did he chatter about his illness, about his acquaintance, about everything and everybody.

After this, there was no managing him; he still had terrible attacks of pain every now and then, but as soon as they were over he would insist upon his valet dressing him, and

then got up in the most *outré* style of the period, would sally forth to get what amusement he could. He even went to a ball one night, and finding himself there, actually danced till the small hours set in, and were fast growing into big ones. Upon this, Mrs. Beauclerc's patience finally deserted her, she packed up her things, and then having dressed herself for her journey, came into her son's room to say good-bye to him. Cosmo was lying on the sofa in a loose dressing-gown, his face was even more leaden than usual in its colour, his hand shook so much that he could hardly pour out some soda-water from the bottle on the table beside him. Perhaps his appearance was not particularly calculated to win any young girl's love on that day, but certainly he had never been more calculated to move any mother's heart to pity, yet his own mother was unmoved. She stooped and kissed him, and said she was

sorry to find she could be of no use to him, but as this was clearly the case, she thought it was her duty to go back to his father, who was tired of being alone. "But you must let me know, Cosmo, if you get worse. Promise to let me know at once, or I shall not go easy in my mind."

"Oh yes, I'll let you know," said Cosmo, wearily. "If this child ain't up to it, Jennings shall drop you a line. Send Jennings to me now, will you, mother?" and then as Mrs. Beauclerc left the room, gathering her shawl round her as if to hide some secret sorrow from the world, a weary dissatisfied woman, who knew she was not doing her duty, and yet could not bring herself to try to do it, had indeed no power so to try any longer, her poor little son turned over on the sofa, and hid his face among the cushions, while large hot tears rolled down his cheeks. He was weak and tired, and excitable

natures like his are easily moved to tears, but he never forgot his mother's leaving him that day. Indeed, he had not much time in which to forget it, poor little fellow! And when Sandy Beaumont wrote to suggest coming to him, he hailed the idea with a wild rapture, such as it would have done the other good to know, for Sandy was craving to be of use to somebody, craving to give pleasure to somebody.

At that ball which Cosmo Beauclerc went to, and danced at for so many hours, thereby shortening his life by at least as many days, not to say weeks, he met with an old London acquaintance of his—a girl who had passed the stage of simply looking pretty, and thought she must say something sharp to amuse her partners. It is difficult always to think of something sharp to say, so this kind of girl often falls into the error of saying simply disagreeable things, not out of any in-

grained ill-nature, but simply because she thinks she must say something to arrest her hearer's attention, and is yet unable to think of anything that will arrest it pleasantly. It was with the idea of interesting Cosmo Beauclerc that this London acquaintance said to him, as they stood up to go through a quadrille together:

"Have you heard how that wonderful beauty, Miss O'Grady, is going to make a runaway match with a foreign Count, after all?"

"Oh no, she ain't," said Cosmo, looking very grave on the instant, and entirely intent on the figure of the quadrille; "she is going to marry a cousin of hers."

"Yes, yes, I know he wanted to marry her, but she prefers this Count. I never was so surprised in my life; I always thought she would go in for strawberry leaves."

"She is satisfied with plenty of coin instead. It is not true about the Count, 'pon honour, it is not."

"Why, I've heard it from the very best authority. Nellie De Veux wrote me a long letter yesterday morning, describing him exactly, and Nellie is one of Miss O'Grady's greatest chums, so she is safe to be right."

"No, 'pon honour, she ain't, not this time. Miss O'Grady is awfully in love with this cousin of hers. This child has been staying at the same house with both of them, just the other day, so he must know, and they are going to make a match of it. It is your turn to advance."

And the London acquaintance went forward, still thoroughly unconvinced, and when that figure was over they talked of something else, only when, a few weeks after, she heard of Kathleen's marriage to her cousin, Lord Killowen, she wished she had believed Cosmo

Beauclerc. After all, those talkative little men were sometimes to be depended upon, and it would have been a great thing to have been beforehand with the world about such a piece of news as Miss O'Grady's marriage! But Cosmo had not meant Lord Killowen, when he had talked of Miss O'Grady's cousin, with whom she was so awfully in love.

Cosmo went to no more balls after his mother left him; men friends dropped in to have a smoke with him, and when he was well enough, they were admitted, and he would smoke with them, though smoking was nearly as bad for him now as dancing. Indeed, everything seemed to be bad for him now, and, after all, what did it matter, a day or two sooner or later, the end was certain, anyhow? So Cosmo thought when he thought at all.

No more serious thoughts passed through

the little man's head, while now, for such a long time, he was brought face to face with death. Some people think that the approach of death must always make its victims serious; they seem to forget that serious thoughts do not come very naturally to all people, and that a man, who has all his life been putting away serious thoughts as too troublesome, is hardly likely to care for the trouble of them when he is weak and suffering. "I have but a short time more to live; let it be as happy a time as possible!" thought Cosmo Beauclerc; and that was, perhaps, his most serious thought now. "After death!" That had a terrible sound to him; he had confused recollections of what he had been taught in his childish days about heaven and hell, and such as he now was, he thought that either place would be equally unendurable. Hell, of course, he could not desire; and heaven, would, he thought, be most unutterably dull,

if it were at all like what it had been described to him. So he decided that either alternative was unsuited to such a harmless little butterfly as he was, and that after death there must be some third state, or possibly no *being* at all. Anyhow, he would not trouble himself about such things now; he was ill, and wanted to be amused. Why, even a novel overtaxed his weak and wearied mind, and all those who came about him urged him to keep up, and did all that lay in their power to distract and enliven him. It was no time for thinking now. His friends of his own standing were quite of the opinion that he was hipped, and if he were going off the hooks, why, that in itself was quite bad enough, without thinking about it beforehand; and Cosmo was not difficult to persuade of this, as they came and prattled about their horses and their dogs, their races and their billiards, and gave and took odds all

indiscriminately, as it were, while Cosmo jotted down bets on next year's Derby in that grand gold monogramed betting-book of his, just as jauntily as of old, and as if he expected to see many another year's Derby yet. But the men who made the bets with him knew well enough that he could not live over even one more year, and thus they gave and took odds almost as indiscriminately as Cosmo himself.

But the end was drawing very near, and when Sandy Beaumont arrived he found the little fellow writhing, and, indeed, almost screaming with the pain he was undergoing. He had been keeping up all the afternoon, chaffing and being chaffed by these so-called friends of his; but it had been a great effort to him, and only his pluck and determination to die "game" had kept him up, till they had, at last, cleared out, and now he had broken down finally and hopelessly. He held

out his hand to Sandy Beaumont, but no words of welcome would come from the white, gasping lips. "Oh, old man, I'm precious bad," he said; and then a more violent twinge came, and an oath cut him short in whatever he had intended to say.

"Have you sent for a doctor?" asked Sandy, in an undertone, of the servant.

"No, sir; he has often been as bad as this before, and we know what to do," the servant whispered back. Then he went on, in an even more confidential tone, "It is Mrs. Beauclerc that ought to be telegraphed for. Don't you think so, sir?"

"No, no; I won't have my mother sent for," cried little Cosmo, catching these last words. "Confound you, Jennings, what a fool you are! Can't you fetch me something? Can't you——oh! send for Dr. Braud—send for Dr. Brand—oh!" And he went off into

a long volley of intermingled shrieks and oaths.

There was no more jesting—no more talking of going off the hooks now. Cosmo Beauclerc was dying, and he knew it; and he turned to Sandy in an agony of terror.

"Oh, no, no; it can't be!" he cried. "Oh, say I shall live. Oh, Beaumont, only say I shall—in this pain—anyhow—anyhow. I can't die! Oh, I can't. I am not fit. I can't—indeed I can't!" And he burst into a passion of tears.

Then there followed some of those terrible hours, such as it is almost impossible for any one who has lived through once ever to look back upon! The curses have not been so familiar to the lips in life, but in those moments of terror and agony, they seem to rise quickest to the surface, and those who stand by can but listen in awe-struck anguish; for, to the most hardened sinner, curses sound awful,

coming from the lips of the dying. And what can be more painful than the spectacle of human terror at the last dread moment, when the enemy must be faced, and flight itself has become impossible!

Sandy Beaumont had been present at more than one terrible death-bed before now, but even to him it was a relief when it was all over, and he could close the lids over those glazed, staring eyes, while that thin, frightened voice was heard no more. As to the servant, he was pale and trembling, and had for some time past been wholly useless.

"Oh, sir! he was always a good master to me!" he said, with the tears streaming down his cheeks; "but he could not have died worse, not if he had been born a heathen."

"People are not responsible for what they say in such great physical pain," said Sandy Beaumont, in harsh, grating tones. "You

have telegraphed to Mrs. Beauclerc. It would be better to telegraph again now, in case she should not have started. Then go and lie down. I will watch here."

It was early morning now, and as the servant left him, and Sandy threw up the window and leant out, he saw the pink of morning already colouring a distant peep of grey sky. Then he turned away sadly, almost indignantly, and sat down by the side of his dead friend, the morning of whose life was such a short time passed, and yet was now gone for ever! Poor little Cosmo! he had been a gentleman through everything. He had never told a lie to any man, nor wilfully injured a woman; and yet—and yet, is it only negative actions that are required of us? And what had become of the talent intrusted to him? Yes, if it had been only one, what had become of it now?

But why write so much of him? Who

ever thinks again of men like these, when once they are dead? Soon will Harry Grenville be as popular as ever Cosmo Beauclerc was in the gay Ryde society. Soon will his brother officers pronounce Hyde Campbell quite as much of a dressed-up puppy as "Poor Beauclerc, you remember?" for Cosmo had never been popular among his brother officers. They had often grudged him his so large share of play, and so small share of work. He had always held himself above and aloof from them, and they had revenged themselves by laughing at his airs in their turn, and leaving caricatures of the little fellow about for Cosmo himself to stumble upon, and which he could sometimes afford to laugh at as merrily as any one, but which sometimes cut the little fellow to the quick, though he took care not to show this; for Cosmo was keenly sensitive to ridicule, and, like all truly sensitive people, never

spared any pains to hide this failing as long as it was possible to him. But, though his place was soon filled up in his old haunts at Ryde, and in his regiment, and though London never missed him (whom does London miss?), yet it was after his death that Mabel Gordon first grew so wild and flighty. She had been fast and frivolous before, but she was faster than ever now; and people wondered as they talked of her wild doings, and started with surprise when told how young she still was; but they sought no explanation of her premature aging, her want of thought or feeling. They never guessed that Mabel Gordon's tragedy had been played out, and that all her little stock of feeling had been used up, in that fast and furious flirtation with Cosmo Beauclerc, which they had laughed over and forgotten, and which he had forgotten also, all volatile that he was, but which she had not forgotten—could

not forget quite at first, though the recollection of it was not such as to ennoble her; and she daily grew to be less and less of the nice girl she had once promised to become. Poor Mabel Gordon! Poor Cosmo Beauclerc, to leave such fruits behind him! And there were other such fruits, and some worse, and very few better. But why write of a man like this, after he is dead and forgotten? Surely, to say the one is to say the other of a mere butterfly, such as he was.

Sandy Beaumont had been terribly tried of late; he was not of the mould that dies for love, a rarer mould this than old romances would lead us to suppose, in spite of those two hundred virgins, who died in their first bloom, when Abdallah, the bashful and the beautiful, chose out Amina for his bride; neither was he of that perhaps commonest mould of all, that disappointed in one quarter, must needs at once turn to some other to supply

the aching void, and the more at once, the more bitterly it has been disappointed. He had wished with his whole heart to make Kathleen his wife—for how long he himself did not know—but certainly for a time, with his whole heart, yet he could have borne to be disappointed in this wish, he could have gone on his way the same as before, only perhaps a trifle harder and graver in his bearing, had it not been for the manner of his disappointment; had it not been for his knowledge that Kathleen suffered at least as much as himself at this present time, and that he had every reason to anticipate yet greater suffering for her in the future. It was this that tried him so cruelly, that made him feel as if he must throw himself against this seeming arbitrary fate, that had stepped between him and his cousin, must break or be broken by it. Why should he not have clasped her in his arms, and met Lord

Killowen when he returned, with the words, "She is not yours, but mine by a marriage far holier than this wretched mockery you have but now been playing before heaven?" He had felt the temptation when he had refused Kathleen that kiss, which she had implored from him, clasping his knees, grovelling on the ground as she asked it. He wished almost that he had kissed her now, and yet he knew that it would have been dangerous for both of them, and the recollection of it still more so. Besides, had he yielded so far, could he ever have restrained himself again? Sandy thought he could not.

It was strange to him to think of it all now, as he sat by Cosmo Beauclerc's dead body, keeping watch beside it through the silent hours of dawning. But he could not have slept, and thus watching he could hardly fail to think of Kathleen; indeed she had

never been absent from his thoughts, since that day when he had last parted from her. And had not Cosmo Beauclerc also desired her for his wife, had he not loved her as much as one so volatile was capable of loving? And now he had but just died, and already it was all one, whether he had had what he desired, and won the woman he loved, or had not. It was all one, so Sandy thought, as he watched beside his friend's dead body. When would it be so with himself? And when that hour came, would it find him unprepared, as it had found Cosmo Beauclerc, or should he have so trained himself as to be able to greet the "mildest herald by our fate allotted" with the greeting of a friend, and with a chastened gladness to follow his gentle beckoning into the "Silent Land?" Truly those German legends of the "Sable Knight," the "Glen Guest," would have sounded very meaning-

less to Sandy Beaumont, lonely and sick at heart as he now was; he might not be prepared for Death, but the thought of it was very sweet to him in the distance, and had the gift of immortality been conferred upon him then, he would have deemed it as cruel a gift as Tithomus did of old.

Sandy Beaumont was very near turning Methodist at this time of his life; he was too kindly hearted towards all the world long to remain so, but for a few days he felt and thought very much as a Methodist would have felt and thought, and for long months after, these thoughts and feelings did not entirely leave him. Indeed, he was never the same man again after that dreary dawning spent in watching by his dead friend's side, and though he never spoke of it to any one, he ever afterwards mentally dated his "conversion" from that dismal watching, for, as the years went on, Sandy became

what young ladies of the present day would call dreadfully Low Church, and he used the phraseology of that party in his thoughts, if indeed we may any of us be said to use any phraseology in our thoughts. A good deal of the character of his after life was determined by the clergyman who called the day after Cosmo died; he had called repeatedly during the poor little fellow's illness, but had never been admitted; now he was admitted, and saw Sandy Beaumont. He was a good earnest man, as was shown by his not slackening in his efforts in spite of his many repulses, and now that he was admitted to talk with the friend of the misguided young man, who had so persistently refused to see him, he immediately began to make the most of his opportunity, taking for granted, naturally enough, that Sandy Beaumont was just such another misguided young man, as "our poor young friend, who

has thus early been taken from among us."

But by degrees his tone changed, he saw that Sandy Beaumont was not quite what he had at first imagined, and, good man that he was, he hastened to pour balm in the wounds which he himself had thus rashly made, and to give comfort rather than warning mingled with his instruction. This last was he found much needed, for although Sandy was not exactly the misguided young man that this clergyman had at first supposed him to be, he was like most young Englishmen of the upper classes, far more ignorant about religious teaching than many charity-school children. Happily it is not knowledge that is required to enter into the kingdom of heaven, there is no competitive examination at its lofty portals, only they are very narrow, and none but those who have stripped themselves of the cares and desires of this life

can hope to go in thereat. Sandy was very ready thus to strip himself, and the good clergyman, who had spent his life fighting against Romanists and Romanising tendencies, and so fighting had grown daily more simply Evangelical, found Sandy a very apt pupil; and relaxed no pains to instruct in the right way this young man, whom he had found walking in it very blindly, thus at every step running terrible danger of straying to the right hand or the left simply by mistake, and saved only by the watchful care of One, who guided his steps, and who had now brought him across this clergyman, caring not at all whether he were Evangelical or Ritualistic, since he was such a man as was able to teach others the way that they should walk in.

When Mrs. Beauclerc arrived it was terrible to have to tell her that she had come too late, all was over, and her son had

not sent for her, had refused to have her sent for, till the time came, when he was so little himself, that no one had regarded his orders any longer. She broke down altogether; she was wild with rage and misery; she would not look upon her dead son's face; she would not listen to the clergyman; she wrung her hands, and raved at every one who came near her. Sandy almost thought she tore her hair, certainly she was beside herself, but this was on the first evening. The next day she came down very pale and quiet, with an expression of almost cringing humility, such as it was very painful to behold. She seemed to think she had been terribly punished, but that the punishment had been sent her for her sins, and now she must bear it or anything; she listened to the clergyman, when he called again; she let him say all that he had to say, and she answered him when he asked her questions, but he gave her no comfort, and he

saw he gave her none. All religious words and ways of thinking were strange to Mrs. Beauclerc; she often marked religious passages in the volumes of poetry with which her library abounded, but it was for the poetry, not for the religion contained in them. She was a poor crushed woman, she had been crushed long ago, she was only a little more crushed now. This death of her son was but another burden added to her burden she had already learnt to bear; she must bear it about with her now to her grave, and what comfort could religion give her now? She had taught him none.

"Of course I had been prepared for it for a long time," she said, with that wearied humbled expression that seemed to sit uneasily on features naturally so proud; "his constitution had been breaking up for a long time, and he was so little at home, especially of late, that it was to be expected he should

die away from home, and possibly alone. You were with him though, were not you ?"

"Yes, I arrived just in time."

"I can only be thankful there was some one with him besides a servant. I did not know you were a friend of his, but then I knew so little about him, and he really had a good many friends, I believe; he was always popular. After all there was not much harm in him," and she looked up at Sandy with weary tearful eyes, too sad to shed the tears that had dulled their brightness for so many a year.

"There was great good in him," said Sandy, still bluntly.

Then Mrs. Beauclerc glided off into some conversational commonplace. It was not for her to speak evil of her son, but she had had no eyes to discover the good in him, if good there had been, and so she could not talk of him any more with Mr. Beaumont, who held

such a much better opinion of him, than she did. As for Sandy, he could not understand this tall sorrowful lady with the crushed manner, who talked sentiments as wild as any to which Kathleen had ever given utterance, and yet could shed no tear for her only son, nor had ever found any love to give him in all the years that he had lived. Yet he grew to like her better, when she insisted on attending the funeral herself. She had wished to have her dead son taken away to be buried at the home that had been so little home to him; but Colonel Beauclerc had refused his consent to this, for the Colonel was one of those pleasure-loving men, who ever flee from sickness and sorrow, and had the funeral been at his own place, he must perforce have attended it: so Cosmo was buried in Dublin, where he died, and Sandy Beaumont felt drawn to the wretched mother, whose face grew more touching, in its self abasement,

and whose tall figure stooped more and more, as the coffin was lowered into the ground, yet who could not shed a tear, while strangers stood around. She wept bitterly, as she drove back with him alone, after all was over.

Next day she told him that Colonel Beauclerc was suffering from one of his bad attacks of gout when she left him, and had indeed been very unwilling that she should do so. "You were kind enough the other day, to say that you should be staying here a few days longer, and would see to all arrangements for me, could you arrange this for me?" and she held out to him a design for a monumental cross roughly, though artistically sketched. "I should like it to be in granite," she said.

"Certainly, I will see to it for you, but what dimensions should you like!"

"I think the stonecutter would be the

best judge of them. I should like it to look like this in the end, and the inscription I have written here at length."

He took the paper from her, and saw written in delicate Italian hand: "Cosmo Beauclerc, only son of Colonel and Mrs. Beauclerc, of Runnington Park, Yorkshire. Aged 24. 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' 'And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it.'"

Sandy could not quite at first see the connection of these two fragmentary texts, and he looked at Mrs. Beauclerc, as if for an explanation, but she avoided his eye, and a few minutes afterwards she had gone. She never saw Sandy Beaumont again; but this man, who had watched by the death-bed of her young son, was ever after a peculiar man among men to Mrs. Beauclerc, and Sandy never ceased to feel a pitying regard for this

woman, who might have made so much of her son, and had made nothing, and who knew it so well—so terribly well, now when it was too late for such knowledge to be of any avail.

CHAPTER IV.

A GENERAL ELECTION.

It seemed to be Sandy's fate to be a nurse at this present time. Tom O'Grady had been attacked with a fit of gout, as well as Colonel Beauclerc, and as his was rheumatic gout, he had been ordered to take some German waters, and he now wrote to ask his nephew to accompany him. Sandy had completed all the necessary arrangements in Dublin, and he was nothing loath to go abroad and try the effect of change of scene, so he gladly agreed to accompany his uncle. But the easy-going Clubman of old standing was disappointed; he had expected a genial, cheery, young companion, and he

found a man graver, and as it often appeared to him, older than himself, who refused to be amused by anything; seemed almost to think it wrong, indeed, to be amused, and appeared desirous to impregnate every one with his own gloomy ideas of life. Sandy could not shake off the impression left on him by Cosmo Beauclerc's death-bed; he had liked the little fellow though he had never known much of him, but he had always believed that there was much good in him, and had often maintained that he had not had a fair chance. Was that all taken into account now? Was it indeed true? They were awful questions, and it was with a feeling of relief that Sandy looked back upon that day at Faversham Cottage when, at Lady Faversham's request, he had spoken seriously to Cosmo Beauclerc, and the poor little butterfly had broken down at once. "I know I'm awfully bad, and there's no good in me at all, but there must

be some hope for me somewhere, or I should not have been saved from doing more harm, as I have been."

It had struck Sandy at the time as rather a childish defence, but he looked back on it now with such intense pleasure, as he would not then have believed that any words of Cosmo's could ever have the power of giving him. Are not penitence and faith all that is asked of us? By degrees, the words grew golden to Sandy, and as the days went on, he learnt to think of Cosmo Beauclerc as being now in some happier, purer school than that of earth, and as being trained there to be such as should be one day meet for the kingdom of heaven. It was the doctrine of purgatory full-fledged; but who of us do not, though, perhaps, unconsciously, believe as much as this, thinking of those whom we have lost? Who of us do not believe it in thinking of ourselves? Nay, there must be

a purging for all of us, perhaps in a minute of time, who can tell! But at least we all know that time is of no account, when we come to consider eternity. And as Sandy learnt to think in this way, he grew happier, he began again to look upon the world as a place in which men are meant to live and work, not simply as a place of probation, such as he had of late been too much regarding it.

Tom O'Grady found some comfort in his nephew in the end, and now, as his gout was fast retiring before the wonder-working powers of the German waters, he began to believe that it had been his own illness that had made him at first fancy Sandy so grave and changed, and that, in reality, his nephew was the same as he had always been. But Sandy was not the same: he had new thoughts about what it was his duty to do, and the work that he had to perform in the world—

thoughts such as had not troubled him very much of old. He began again to think that he ought to go back to Australia; the idea was very distasteful to him, he had gone through such dull misery there that the very name of Australia was hateful to him, as the name of any place becomes hateful where we have passed through the bitter time, in which we strive not to repine, and strive in vain. The place where we have suffered the cruel blow, where all our hopes were crushed at once, or we lost the dearest friend we had, that place becomes holy to us from the very grief it brought, and though it may be that we never wish to see it again, yet we cannot possibly ever come to think of it without affection; but the place to which we went afterwards, where our grief grew blunted and gradually staled upon us, that place becomes hateful to us, loosening the last link that bound us to the object of our affec-

tions, the grief with which we sorrowed for its loss. And so Sandy Beaumont hated Australia, yet at the same time he now asked himself whether he ought not to go back to look after his property there, and yet more, to look after the men employed upon it. Just as he was coming to the conclusion that he ought so to do, a letter arrived, which rather altered the current of his thoughts, suggesting new employment nearer home, and possibly of a more important nature. The letter was from his cousin, Lord Killowen. It began by announcing the already well-known fact that there was to be a general election towards the latter end of November—

"General Murphy, whom I daresay you know, and a few more of the leading men of County ——, are very anxious to bring forward a second Liberal member. I was very keen about it myself, before I

left Ireland; and when I heard from Murphy the other day, I almost thought of throwing up my post there, and returning home at once, to bring my influence more immediately to bear; but whilst this absurd restriction is not removed from Irish Peers, and we are unable to stand ourselves for any place with which we are connected, I do not care to place myself in the thick of political excitement, where I should only be tempted to useless railing against the constituted authorities, who forbid my taking a more active part; and the truth is, that both Lady Killowen and myself are unwilling so soon to leave this place, where we have found so much happiness; and at my wife's solicitations, I have at last quite given up the idea. The great difficulty seems to be that Langley, whose canvas began a little while ago, appears to be personally unpopular, as a foreigner; for such, many of the old Irish

still regard an Englishman of pure English extraction, even though he may have purchased property in the neighbourhood. Now of course the O'Grady and Faversham interests pretty well divide the county, and I think, that if one of our family were to come forward, there would be little doubt of his being returned, as well as the old Liberal member, Sir George Maloney. What do you say to coming forward yourself? I don't fancy money is of much consideration to you."

Here followed a few calculations, which perhaps it would be as well not to divulge, and then the letter wound up with—"The Faversham's have been always rather ultra-Conservative, but I don't fancy the present Earl troubles himself much about politics. You know him better than I do" [Sandy thought he did], "and as he is a personal friend of yours, that may possibly induce him

to hold yet more aloof from the contest, which would be an additional gain for us. Of course, you may rely upon my backing you up, as far as I can at this distance, but you are so well known about Killowen, that you would, I should think, find very little difficulty there; certainly less than any other Liberal I can think of. If you think of coming forward, please put yourself at once in communication with General Murphy, he is anxiously awaiting your decision, and there is no time to be lost; so that I should advise your returning to Ireland immediately. My wife would join with me in kind regards, but she does not know I am writing, and I must post this at once," and then the writer signed himself, "Yours truly, Killowen."

On the first time of reading this letter, the part that most interested Sandy, was the sentence, "Lady Killowen and myself are unwilling so soon to leave this place, where

we have found so much happiness; and at my wife's solicitations, I have at last quite given up the idea." But gradually the sense of the rest of the letter began to dawn upon him, and the prospect held forth to him, struck him as very delightful. In his boyish days, what would he have thought of it, that he, Sandy Beaumont, the object of whose highest ambition then was to obtain a commission in a marching regiment, should be one day asked to stand for the county in which he had only at that time a place at all, as the then Lord Killowen's nephew. After all, riches were of some good, since they brought such honours. To be pressed to stand for the county by the present Lord Killowen, his cousin indeed, but a cousin not bound to him by any further ties of friendship, and that not at all at Kathleen's request; in spite of that sentence in which Lord Killowen specially said she knew nothing of his writing,

Sandy read the letter twice through, before he felt quite sure of this. But if Kathleen had even thought there was any, the remotest possibility of such a letter being written to him, she would have taken care to have given some words of her own, to be sent as a message to him. Sandy knew her too well to doubt this.

So Kathleen had had nothing to do with it, and Lord Killowen had suggested it, not only as feasible, but even desirable for the Liberal interests. Sandy became an ardent politician on the instant. Surely this was a better career than returning to that far away Australia—day by day becoming more distasteful to him. He hastened to unfold this new project to his uncle, and Tom O'Grady grew even more excited than his nephew. "If it was me, I would write to Murphy on the instant, that I would," he cried. "You should not take two minutes to decide.

The O'Grady interest will carry you through, my boy, and faith, I'll go with you myself to back you up. The O'Grady's shan't be beaten, please heaven; and you're half an O'Grady, you know, yourself; my poor sister's son."

So Tom O'Grady was miraculously cured of his gout by his reverent saintship, a general election; and he and Sandy hastened to Ireland, and met the few leading men of the county, who were of the Liberal party; and sat on committees with them, and set to work canvassing, as if the election were to be next week, and they had the whole of Ireland to win over to their party, and not just one single county. Tom O'Grady was indefatigable, he slapped all the labourers on the back, and shook hands with the artisans, who looked too fragile for any such rough cordiality, and he asked the comely smiling Irish girls what their politics were, and

kissed them when they said they were Liberals, and kissed them just the same when they said they were Conservatives. But they barely knew the names of the two great parties: and as to Tom O'Grady, he knew no more himself, for he had never been a politician before; only, he knew the O'Grady's were Liberals, and that was enough for him.

Sandy undertook all severer business, he delivered addresses of a rather pleasing terseness, when compared with many other of the declamations with which the county was resounding, and he even undertook to argue the matter with one or two tough subjects, and came off victorious more than once. Indeed, all was going swimmingly, and the O'Grady interest was fairly in the ascendant, when there was heard an awful rumour, which very quickly received yet more awful confirmation, and it became known that little Lord

Faversham, fairly outraged by the progress the Liberals were making in his beloved Ireland, could no longer hold aloof, waiting calmly till he might himself be chosen a Representative Peer, as being of the aristocratic politics, he would in all probability be at the next vacancy, but *en attendant* was throwing himself heart and soul into the present contest, and openly announced his determination of bringing in the two Conservatives, the Hon. Hubert de Lancey and Lord John Sandilands at the head of the poll. Then ensued a little friendly correspondence between him and Sandy Beaumont, in which each regretted his opposition to the other, but only as a preliminary to nailing his colours more firmly to the mast, and after this the battle raged more furiously than before.

Sir George Maloney and the Hon. Hubert de Lancey were old foes, and there was a

personal enmity between them, which naturally became embittered at every fresh contest. They fought now with redoubled ardour, and great and artful was the interchange of personalities between them. Not so was it between Sandy Beaumont and Lord John Sandilands, Lord Faversham's first cousin, and as might be said, his representative. In fighting him, Sandy felt he was virtually fighting Lord Faversham, who was only prevented from coming forward more directly himself, by that galling restriction, which prevents Irish Peers, even when incapacitated for a seat in the Upper House, from representing an Irish borough or county. This restriction was not so grievous in his case as in Lord Killowen's, since he might in all probability look forward to obtaining a seat in the House of Lords sooner or later as a Representative; whereas, the other might consider himself only less cut off from politi-

cal life than a Scotch Peer of similar politics, who has not even the choice of standing for an English or Irish borough, and has equally no chance of being elected as a Representative by his brother Peers, among whom by the nature of things the Liberals must always be in a minority; but though Lord Faversham was thus better off than Lord Killowen, he yet was keenly alive to the drawbacks of his position, and Sandy felt that in fighting Lord John, he was virtually fighting his friend, and fighting him also at a disadvantage, since he was unable to come forward himself,when his immense personal popularity would in all probability have easily won for him the victory; so Sandy politely assured his partisans of the regret he felt that he had consented to come forward at all, since he now at every turn found himself in opposition to his dear and valued friend, the Earl of Faversham; while Lord Faversham at the

Conservative meetings won the loudest rounds of applause, when with cheeks aflame, and voice that by its pure clearness was distinctly audible in the furthest corner of the room, though hardly louder than a woman's, he said:

"It is not because I think the county will be unfitly represented by the new Liberal candidate, that I now risk my health, and think no sacrifice of time too great to convince you of the goodness of our cause. If you were to search the whole of Great Britain and Ireland, gentlemen, I do not think you could find a more honourable gentleman, nor one more fit to represent this or any other county than Mr. Beaumont, a man whom I am proud to call my friend. But, gentlemen, a great question is at stake, and on this question Mr. Beaumont has been led, how I know not, for I cannot understand how so honourable a man can be so mistaken, but he

has been led by some influence or other to take the wrong side. And now, the greater my respect for him, the more unwilling does it make me that this county, in which I and my fathers have lived for more than two hundred years, should be represented by one so mistaken. Some men we are not unwilling to see in opposition to ourselves, some men we are almost glad to see there, but Mr. Beaumont is not one of such men, Mr. Beaumont is a man, whom we would gladly welcome as a friend, and whom now that he is our enemy, we must for that very reason fight with tooth and nail, relaxing no effort to oppose the return of such a valuable friend and such a very dangerous foe."

Then loud and repeated were the cheers accompanied by much hearty stamping of hob-nailed boots, and for a few moments Lord Faversham stood still, contemplating the noisy excited assembly, looking more as if he were

some fairy changeling, or boy angel, than as if his had been the words, which had moved it to such a noisy demonstration of feeling. After that, he went on with much such a speech as was to be seen in so many columns of "The Times" during the last general election, saying little about the future, but dwelling much on the past, and talking largely of our fathers, and our fathers' fathers, only in all that Lord Faversham said there was a touch of poetry, such as is often sadly wanting in electioneering addresses, and in all that he said he carried his hearers' hearts with him, and showed that he knew he did so; for the Faversham's had always been popular, and the present boy Earl was not the least so, and this knowledge that he carried his hearers' hearts with him, lent a sort of eloquence to Lord Faversham's speeches, which none can fail to miss, where it is wanting, if they have once heard it, and

which his speeches would never have possessed, had he spoken them in some far away county, where he was either not known or not loved. Those speeches about their fathers, and their fathers' fathers, came home well to the men about Faversham, where there was hardly a man among the electors, who had not been acquainted with as many as three generations of the speaker's own family, for the Favershams had succeeded each other sadly quickly of late.

In the course of his canvas, Sandy was brought a great deal into contact with General Murphy, and through him with the other Murphys, and little Norah, his orphan niece, among them. Like one or two other people, who had never been so before, little Norah had of late become a most ardent politician, and would gladly have done much canvassing herself, only it was so contrary to her shy, quiet nature; but one day she came home

glowing with pleasure, and quite excited out of her usual self.

"Oh, uncle," she cried, as she ran into the library with her skirts still looped up, and her boots showing evident traces of the soil through which she had been walking, "Dan Sullivan and Tim O'Leary have promised us their votes; they say they only would not promise them before, because they wished to promise them to me myself. I am so glad I went to Redditch to-day."

Then she looked round, and saw that her uncle was not alone, but that Sandy Beaumont was standing in the shadow of the opened door referring to some book he had just taken down from the old general's well-stocked shelves.

Sandy thought he had never seen the little girl look so pretty as she did now, all rosy with her walk and the scarcely-repressed excitement; but directly she saw him, poor

Norah's blue eyes sought the carpet at her feet, and she held out her hand to him just as shyly as usual; so that Sandy was almost afraid to thank her for the exertions she had been making in his behalf, so afraid was he of frightening her quite away.

That was always the way with Norah Murphy now; she never followed Sandy about with her eyes, as she had been used to do at one time, nor did her face light up any longer when he spoke to her. She was always in her quiet, gentle fashion, finding little things that she could do for him, but she seemed to shrink from speaking to him; and if she ever saw him at all, Sandy did not know how she managed it, for her eyes were never raised from the ground whenever he was by. Sandy could not doubt any longer that she loved him; hardly any man to whom the idea had once presented itself could have doubted about it now, for La Bruyere tells us "a woman

whose eyes are always fixed on a man, or who always turns them away from him, *fait penser d'elle la même chose;*" and Sandy Beaumont was more skilled than most men in the art of seeing through women's wiles, perhaps because he had so long studied that great mistress in the art of dissimulation, his cousin Kathleen. Anyhow, he could not help seeing that Norah Murphy loved him now, and so one day he seized his opportunity finding her alone in the garden, and asked her if this were not so, telling her first what a dear little wife he thought she would be, and that she might make him very happy if she only loved him. Did she?

"Yes, I do love you," said Norah Murphy, raising those tender forget-me-nots, her eyes, to his face for the first time for many a long day, and startling him by the calm, clear tones in which she spoke. "But you do not love me, Mr. Beaumont, and there is some one

else you would rather have for your wife than me; and because you cannot have her, that does not give you any right to ask me." And little Norah grew quite pale from fear at her own courage, and the voice she had striven so hard to make firm faltered.

Then Sandy held out his hand to her. "You are right, and I beg your pardon. Forgive me, will you?" he said.

Little Norah took hold of the hand he held out to her, and looked up into his face in her pleading childish fashion. "You are very good not to be angry with me," she said, "but you must never speak to me like this again." Then she burst into tears, and Sandy saw her no more that day, and for many days after.

"Dear little girl," he said to himself, "I wish I had not spoken to her. What right had I, indeed!" And then he called himself very severely to task for thinking that, with

a heart already pre-engaged himself, he had any right to little Norah's fresh, innocent love. "But I have it all the same," he thought, and Norah grew dearer to him as he told this to himself, and he thought less and less of Kathleen. She had found "so much happiness" at Constantinople, why should he trouble himself to think any more about her? And he had not much time to think, for the election was drawing very near at hand now.

The contest had become very doubtful indeed, and no one any longer pretended to know how it would end; that is to say, no one who was cool enough to be able to reason about it. In the original instance, when Sandy Beaumont had come forward, he had done so on the understanding that he was on no account to rob the old Liberal member, Sir George Maloney, of his seat, and that till that was secured, all the O'Grady interest

was to go to support Sir George, but the arrangement between Lord John Sandilands and the Honourable Hubert De Lancey was quite different. The Honourable Hubert had been just about to retire discomfeited, and leave the field uncontested to the two Liberals, when Lord Faversham had come to the front under cover of his cousin, Lord John, and even then he had still been anxious to retire himself, preferring that to the too probable defeat he might look for from his old enemy, Sir George Maloney, and dreading the expense of an election that promised to be so severely contested. But Lord Faversham, bent on bringing in two Conservatives, had persuaded him to go on with the contest, promising, himself, to pay a certain amount towards his share of expenses. Encouraged by this, the Honourable Hubert had not been able to resist the idea of a battle royal with his old adversary;

but, partly because he had grown lukewarm at a decisive period, partly because he was so much less personally popular than Lord John, who shone by his cousin's reflected light, it was generally understood among the Conservatives, that if one only of their candidates should be returned, their future representative would be Lord Faversham's cousin, and not their old member, Hubert de Lancey; but it still seemed exceedingly doubtful whether their party would succeed in obtaining any representative at all in this particular county, when the day of nomination arrived.

As usual, at the last election, the towns were for the most part Liberal, the country people Conservative, and it was an awkward moment for Hubert De Lancey, when he first appeared upon the hustings; for all his long acquaintance with Irish mobs only served to make him more timorous as to the possible

result. Though Lord Faversham was the leading spirit among them, his slight small stature was at first hardly visible among the numerous supporters of the Conservative candidates, for almost all of the gentlemen of the county were Conservatives, and the O'Gradys and Murphys were, indeed, almost the only important families that took the other side. But the boy Earl was not at all unwilling to show himself, and soon managing to disengage himself, got to the front to be greeted by a storm of hisses, mingled with occasional shouts for the Favershams, the good old house of Faversham.

Sandy Beaumont, all intent though he now was upon the contest, could not but tremble a little for the slight boyish form, that showed itself thus daringly as a mark for the storm of rabbits, rotten eggs, and, possibly, paving-stones, that he expected every moment to see hurled against it; for the

town, where the nomination was held, was Liberal to a man, and well-known to love a riot as dearly as any town in the whole length and breadth of Ireland. But on a sudden, a voice was heard from among the crowd, "Why don't you go the other side? We don't like to see you there, Lord Faversham;" and then another voice took up the same words, and after a minute or two the hisses had ceased, and the whole mob was singing as lustily as ever in the days of old, an old song, composed in honour of the Favershams, the burden of which was:

> "The Earl, he shed his blood for us,
> And we will die for him."

It was one of those sudden transitions of popular feeling, which will always remain inexplicable, and to which people ought to be cautious about attaching much importance; but Lord Faversham coloured with pleasure,

and could hardly keep the tears from his eyes, especially, as even his friends upon the hustings forgot themselves so far as to join in the rude chorus. Lady Faversham did not attempt to restrain her tears, as she sat at a window looking on, holding little Lord Castlemere on her knee, with Lady Millicent leaning against her, and all three bright with blue ribbons. She looked at her husband, who, just at this moment, dared not look at her, so much touched was he by this new proof of the Faversham popularity, and she glanced at the crowd with grateful tears, and then she looked at Sandy Beaumont, who was smiling at her from his opposition side of the hustings, and smiled an answering smile to his through her happy tears.

After that the business of the day began; the Honourable Hubert De Lancey as the first to come forward, was the first member proposed for the suffrages of the *gentlemen* and

electors so tumultuously swarming round the hustings; but both his proposer's and seconder's speeches, as well as his own, were inaudible even to the reporters, though each of the other members in turn, as well as the Sheriff, came forward to beg for a fair hearing for him; but the people, the so-called electors and gentlemen, did not wish to hear anything. They wanted a row, and there was every promise of their soon getting one; for the country people had come in in some numbers, hoping to stem the current of feeling in the town, and nothing daunted by the idea of its well-known liberality, and though there were hardly enough of them to make their voices heard in the general din, they were likely to gain some allies, when it came to fighting, if only to see fair play. After these pantomimic speeches had been somehow got through, Sir George Maloney was proposed, and then Sandy

Beaumont, and the Liberals all prudently expressing themselves very shortly, and being, fortunately, possessed of good lungs, they managed to obtain some sort of a hearing.

But then it was Lord Faversham's turn to propose his cousin, and it did seem a little strange to Sybil—who had never been present at an election before, and had been curious to see how such things were managed, over and above her interest in this particular contest—it did seem a little curious to her when the mob would not listen to her husband any more than to any other of the Conservatives; and drowned his voice with the very same song they had but now been singing in his honour, interspersed, this time, with many satirical variations.

Sybil, who neither understood elections nor the Irish nature, was cut to the heart; but Lord Faversham took it very good-

humouredly. He saw that there was no chance of his ever obtaining a hearing again now, so he smilingly took off his hat to the crowd; and having kissed his hand to his wife and the two wondering children, retired, without caring further to exhaust his never too powerful voice. Upon this, there was a hip, hip, hurrah for the Favershams! and then the chorus burst out louder than ever:—

> "The Earl he shed his blood for us,
> And we will die for him."

Under cover of which, Lord John's seconder shouted a few sentences into the reporters' ears; and then Lord John himself stood forward, and after having received a rabbit-skin on his face, and a rotten egg on his ungloved hand, and notwithstanding having gesticulated and smiled with perfect equanimity, was at last allowed to hear himself address the mob as "Gentlemen and Elec-

tors;" and then the noise waxed louder than ever, and his ordeal seemed to be considered at an end, for he was allowed gracefully to to retire.

"Well, it only remains now to see who will get the hands. As yet, certainly the glory has all been yours," said Sandy Beaumont, in his pleasant mellow tones, as he shook hands with the young Earl, with whom he had not exchanged a word as yet, in spite of the profuse compliments they had each paid the other in their speeches, though in Lord Faversham's case these had unfortunately been inaudible. As to Sandy, he had gone further than he had ever gone before this day, in speaking of his "much valued friend, and your dearly loved landlord;" but then, as everybody knows, the feelings are highly strung on nomination days, and speeches go down then which would be counted as gross flattery at any

other time. Lord Faversham had bowed then in the manner of the proposer of an Opposition candidate, but he shook hands warmly now as he said, "Well, you will have it all your own way now. But the hands tell nothing, any more than the glory you talk of. Wait for the poll."

And it was as well he was thus prepared to wait, for in a minute the show of hands was, as it seemed, unanimous for Sir George Maloney and Mr. Beaumont, whom the Sheriff was about to pronounce duly elected, when a poll was called for Mr. De Lancey and Lord John.

"It will be a difficult job getting away," said the Honourable Hubert, looking down shyly at the mob, a moving mass of upraised hands and angry faces, among whom paving-stones seemed already to be flying pretty efficaciously. "You won't think of going till they disperse, Faversham?"

"I am going at once," said Lord Faversham with that daring confidence in his own popularity, for which the Favershams were so well noted, and which perhaps did more than anything else to keep it up.

There was but one opinion on the hustings, that it was madness for a Conservative to go among the crowd at this moment, and Sandy Beaumont urged Lord Faversham at least to take his arm, if he were determined on going away at once; but Lord Faversham scorned such a notion. What, a Faversham walk away from the hustings arm-in-arm with a Liberal! No, never. If none of his own party would go with him, he would go alone, and down he went, with his blue rosette shining conspicuous to all the world. The Fates favoured the brave as usual. The first man who saw him, was one of his own farmers, who had determined to vote against his wishes, but none the less delighted in his young landlord.

"Why if there is not Lord Faversham," he exclaimed, as soon as he recovered from the stupefaction into which the sight of the Earl had thrown him, and at once he warded off a missile hurled at the hateful blue ribbon.

"The Earl he shed his blood for us,
And we will die for him"

rolled out the honest fellow in his rough, hearty tones, and at once the popular air was set going, and for a moment the general tumult was appeased, and all hats were waved in the air, and with an hurrah for the Earl, a narrow path was made for him by which to pass to his carriage.

"Arrah, me Lord; but you should spake for us, if ne'er another did!" "Ye shouldn't turn against the people's rights." "Give us the ballot." "Lower the rates; ah! but ye'll never do it with those colours, I am thinking." And yellow ribboned hats were lowered to him in all directions, while Lord

Faversham passed through them with a proud smile curling his pretty boyish lips, shaking hands right and left, as he assured the people in his clear, ringing tones: "We'll lower the rates for you. We're your real friends. Give us your votes, my men, and you'll soon see."

"No, we sha'n't," shouted out a little tailor, with a stentorian voice, "for we'll die for you, my Lord, but we'll never give you our votes;" and a laugh rang through the crowd at this declaration of intention. But now Lord Faversham was safe in his carriage, and it was no one's interest to restrain the crowd any longer, and stones and rabbit-skins flew more merrily than ever.

The Conservative candidates both got away safely at last, though the unfortunate Hubert was carried away on the shoulders of policemen, and even then did not escape without being rather seriously maimed, for

the beautiful old German custom is still kept up in England, and Englishmen, like their German forefathers, still think it wisest to take counsel after drinking; the next morning's sober consultation, to ratify the brilliant resolutions of yesterday, is now omitted; but even in the time of Tacitus, that seems to have been considered *slow*, and the present age, doubtless, only follows out it general go-a-head tendencies, by discarding it. But though this sober next morning's council is not deemed necessary now, Englishmen still prefer the aid of a glass or two of beer more than ordinary, when they have to debate about matters seriously affecting their welfare, and if the consequences are sometimes somewhat undesirable, why so we may suppose they were in old times, and the world still goes on just the same.

Later on the Riot Act was read, and a line regiment was ordered to clear the streets, and

after it had been repulsed once by a perfect shower of paving stones, now aided by potatoes, which had taken the place of rabbit-skins and egg-shells, apparently used up earlier in the day, an hussar regiment was called to the rescue, and between the two peace was restored, after not more than one or two victims had fallen to the general violence.

There was a repetition of the same scene on the polling day; and Lord Faversham and old Sir George Maloney were conspicuous from opposite windows, each with tears in their eyes, as they besought the rival parties to keep the peace, but all in vain, and the military had to be called out again, and made short work of the mob this time, for they had no patience with the people any longer, and sharp things had been said about the foot soldiers' want of success on the previous occasion, which some people attributed to their too great forbearance, but which the

hussars seemed not unwilling to attribute to something else. At last quiet was restored, and in the end, when Lord John's name was declared at the head of the poll, and Hubert de Lancey's second, the malcontents confined themselves to groans and hisses, and then, after breaking a few windows, to relieve the surprise into which this announcement had thrown every one, dispersed in tolerable order.

"Gross bribery," said Sir George Maloney, while Sandy Beaumont, who had driven his supporters to their wits' ends to find means of bribery sufficiently indirect not to be instantly cut short by him, and who had said in his resolute fashion at the beginning of the contest that, as far as he could help it, not a man should be made drunk at his expense, not if it were to bring him in a dozen votes, held his peace, for he was too much disgusted by the whole business to

have a word left to say. "Talk of bribery, indeed! why, had they not all bribed? Sir George Maloney as grossly as any one."

"I shall petition," said Sir George; "I shall petition, certainly. It is abominable."

"So it is," said Sandy, with a groan, watching a little group of voters staggering off, singing, "We won't go home till morning." "By George, there is a woman knocked down. I'll never have to do with another election, not as long as I live."

But then Sandy Beaumont had turned Methodist in these last days, and was a little inclined to agree with those people, who pronounced balls and races alike inventions of the devil, so no wonder his stomach revolted somewhat from a general election.

CHAPTER V.

KATHLEEN TRYING.

In the end it was proved, not only that gross bribery had been used, but that the votes had been wrongly added up, and that Sir George Maloney was really ahead of Hubert De Lancey, and Sandy Beaumont only twenty behind him, though still a good hundred votes behind the popular Lord John. However, Sir George had already sent in his petition before these disclosures were made; and, the case being a clear one, it was decided that the election should be had over again; and Sandy Beaumont, keeping to his resolution to have no more to do with elections, and the Hon. Hubert thinking it inexpedient

to offer himself again, it ended in Sir George Maloney and Lord John Sandilands being returned for the county, instead of Sir George Maloney and Hubert De Lancey, who had represented it during the last Parliament; and this was all the result that came of the recent grand excitement. It was to be hoped the result compensated for the means that had been taken to obtain it.

But long before this result was obtained, Sandy Beaumont had left England again. The Dowager Lady Killowen had written him one of her usual short notes, always much to the point. She wished to go up the Nile, she said: she had never been there, and she had been everywhere else; but she could not go alone, and no one would accompany her. As to Sandy, he never came near her now. So Sandy made a hasty packing, and started off at once to join his aunt. He had been defeated in his election. He

had been rejected by the girl he had hoped to make his wife. What better thing could he do now than keep Lady Killowen company upon the Nile? She seemed to desire that he should do so; surely he ought to be only too glad to have it in his power now to return to her some tittle of the kindness she had shown to himself in his young days?

Thus the Dowager Lady Killowen and her nephew, Sandy Beaumont, started up the Nile together; and, meanwhile, her other nephew, Lord Killowen, and his bride, lived on in Constantinople; and the young Lady Killowen was a great disappointment to the Embassy there. The Ambassador had been stationary for two or three years now, and none of his family, nor even any of the *attachés*, had taken a trip to England for some time; but they had read the English papers diligently during their voluntary exile, and also received letters from home, and in

all these they had heard grand accounts of what the fast girl of a year or two back had degenerated into, and of all the wild ways of "the girl of the period." When the news of Lord Killowen's appointment and marriage arrived almost simultaneously, it had been understood at the Embassy that the young Lady Killowen was by no means one of the least startling specimens of this new, startling feature of the age; and, when she arrived, they were at first confirmed in this belief: for Kathleen came fresh from Paris, and her toilette comprised one or two rather striking novelties, as they were considered in those out-of-the-way parts in which it was now her lot to live for a while. Whilst dress is written of so much at large and so minutely in the leading literary papers of the day, it would be needless to specify what these novelties were. Suffice it that they rather astonished people at the Embassy, and pre-

pared them to look upon Kathleen as an interesting study of the new English feature. But they were disappointed. The young Lady Killowen did nothing to attract their notice. If she had been brought up all her life in the retirement of a harem, she could not have conducted herself with more propriety. In return for the civilities that were shown him on his first arrival, Lord Killowen gave a dinner-party or two, and then Kathleen did the honours of her husband's house with a gracious condescension that quite fascinated his guests. She had always understood the art of doing the honours ever since, long ago, she and Sandy, as boy and girl together, had played at keeping houses; and she had overpowered the untaught schoolboy with the easy grace with which she would entertain him at what she called her house, in return for the rougher cordiality with which he would welcome her when she

deigned to accept of his hospitalities. But, though she evidently excelled in the art of doing the honours, Kathleen did nothing more that could excite attention. She was always fashionably dressed—Parisians would have said beautifully so; but the Embassy had hardly been educated up to the last fashions as yet, and thus sometimes failed to see the beauty in them. She was very beautiful herself—that no one could fail to see; but she was very quiet, not in the least startling, or even amusing; indeed, she appeared to have very little conversation, and never seemed to care to exert herself sufficiently to talk, unless when her husband was joining in the conversation.

The truth was, Kathleen was still giddy with all she had gone through of late; she felt that she might have married the Count Manfredi; she might have married her cousin Sandy; she might also have married Cosmo

Beauclerc: in that case she would have been his widow now, she supposed, for she had heard of his death, though it had affected her little; but she had not so very long ago meant to accept him, so she might have married him, she thought, and she *had* married Lord Killowen. She was no longer a fast young lady trading upon her beauty, she was no longer the spoilt child of a flighty excitement-loving mother—she was married *now*, the wife of a well-to-do, highly proper, and respectable Irish nobleman. Kathleen hardly knew herself in her altered circumstances, she had as yet no confidence in her own power of comporting herself well in them, she feared at each moment that she might take a false step, and one that might prove irrecoverable. All her life long she had been accustomed to count upon her mother's love; till lately she had also been accustomed to count upon Sandy Beaumont's,

and now all at once she was thrown upon her own resources as it were, for she could not count upon her husband's. Lord Killowen had spoken rather short of the truth when he had said, that out of all the women he knew she was the one whom he would prefer to have for his wife; that she knew, but she knew also that he did not love her, not as she understood the word. She could fancy quite well how any day she might displease him, and how his displeasure might beso great that he should refuse ever to see her again, and how he might hold to his refusal. Kathleen fancied it all to herself very often, and she fancied also how Sandy would despise her when he heard the news, and her heart ached with a dull aching at the thought. She tried all she could to win Lord Killowen's love; she practised little wifely looks and speeches to please him; she dressed herself with utmost care, that he

might never complain she was less beautiful as a wife than she had been as a girl. When he was by she even exerted herself to talk the old brilliant sparkling talk, and laugh the merry gurgling laugh of other days, but it was an effort to her, and sometimes as she went up to bed at night, and tore off her gay ornaments and looked at herself in the glass, she would be startled to see a face that was almost plain, looking back at her, so worn and weary did she feel.

She saw the note in which Sandy agreed to Lord Killowen's suggestion of his standing for the county, and after she had seen it, that note could never be found again, though Lord Killowen perseveringly searched every hole and corner for it, but Kathleen felt Sandy's note lying heavy on her heart as she pretended to help her husband in his search; yet she could not prevail upon herself to part with one morsel of the dear

handwriting once so familiar. It was after that that Kathleen first began to take such an interest in politics, so as soon to become her Lord's confidant and counsellor. A month after he wrote that note to Sandy Beaumont, he would never have thought of taking such a step without first talking the matter over with his wife; but just at first, Kathleen had shown no interest in his business matters, and he had been quite contented to go on alone as he had always done. It was only afterwards that he learnt to know the benefit of his wife's sympathy and counsel; but it was in home, rather than in foreign politics that Kathleen took the most interest, and she was not even satisfied with her Lord's means of information about these, but wrote to Lady Faversham for full particulars of the contest going on around her home.

"Do tell me everything, dearest," she wrote, "the smallest details will be fraught

with interest for me. How Lord Faversham will shine on an occasion like the present. I would give a good deal to hear his speeches. Poor dear Sandy was never calculated to be very eloquent. I only hope he won't make a great mess of it. Killowen is so much interested, and so am I, but you must not think, dear Sybil, that I do not sympathise with you, though our interests do happen to be opposed just for the present. Sandy is half an O'Grady, you see, and I, who am more than ever an O'Grady now, must wish for *our* candidate, as my husband and I both call him; but I hope Lord John will get on well with his canvas. Though my fear is that he will get on only too well for us. Lord Faversham is so immensely popular, and so deservedly so. I can fancy how keen you will be about it all."

And simple Lady Faversham read this letter, and was quite pleased with it. "Kath-

leen always was such a wonderful girl for adapting herself to circumstances," she thought to herself; "I believe she will end by being quite happy with Lord Killowen. How she must shine at a Foreign Embassy too; but she is quite right, Faversham's speeches are worth any one's hearing;" and then Lady Faversham took her little son upon her knee, and kissed him, as her husband was not at hand for her to lavish her affection upon; and little Lord Castlemere smiled, as he always did, when his mother kissed him.

"Darling mamma," he said, "I do love you so; and, see, I have got a blue ribbon round my hat. I may always wear blue, may I not? It is papa's colour."

Then Sybil kissed him again, and told him he should always wear blue; and straightway proceeded to give her little son his first lesson in Tory politics.

But though Sybil gathered from her friend's letter that there was every prospect of Kathleen ending by being quite happy with Lord Killowen, Kathleen herself was very far from thinking this. She was nervously anxious as to her success in pleasing her husband. She dare not intermit her efforts for a single moment, and the strain was becoming almost too great for her; fortunately, at this time, Lord Killowen's presence was suddenly needed in London on urgent business, and he left her for a while, promising to return as quickly as possible. Kathleen kissed him, and entreated him to promise this before she would let him leave her; but the moment he was gone, she fell upon her knees, and almost thanked God for having sent him away from her, even for a little time; she did not quite do this, but she felt the thankfulness, though she did not dare to express it in words.

Lord Killowen returned again at the end of a month, but what a comfort that month's respite was to his wife, it would be difficult to describe. She felt as if she lived once more; when the burden of his presence had left her, she seemed to breath again more easily. Till then, she had formed no idea of the oppression it had been to her. By the time he came back, she had a new comfort: Sandy had joined Lady Killowen, and though her letters were short, they came frequent, and never without giving some tidings of her companion. Kathleen lived for those letters; each time she saw her mother's writing, she trembled, hoped, feared that there might be some message for her from Sandy, but there was never any. Sometimes she thought Lady Killowen omitted to give any; sometimes she thought he shrank from sending any; sometimes she thought he had forgotten her, but she hungered, thirsted for

those letters giving some news of him, and daily her longing for them grew greater.

Poor Kathleen, it was a bitter purgatory that she went through then, during those winter months; and when the spring came it was no better. The blue waters sparkled and danced in the sunshine, the birds sang, the trees dressed themselves in their fresh spring garments, and the very sun seemed to shine purely out of gladness of heart, not in that dutiful manner in which it lights up our quiet English skies; but there came no gladness to the beauty, whose hair yet rivalled the sun in its shining, whose eye mocked the sea in its blueness. Sometimes she thought it would have been less terrible to her if she had had some fault to find with her husband, but she had no fault to find with him; he was a very finished gentleman, and no man could have treated his wife with more consideration than Lord Killowen showed

towards the cousin, whom he had preferred, out of all the women of his acquaintance, to raise to the proud position of his wife. Kathleen grew ill with misery, but hardly had she began to do so, before her husband noticed that she had grown languid of late, that her cheek was paler than of old.

"I am afraid this climate does not suit you," he said, looking at her one day, as she sat opposite to him at the dinner-table, after the dessert had been placed upon the table and the servants had retired; for in whatever country he might find himself, Lord Killowen always liked to keep up all his English habits.

"It is the spring that tires me, it will pass when the spring does," said Kathleen, wearily laying down the ripe, honey-sweet date she had just tasted, but which cloyed upon her almost like her own life; though her life unlike the date, cloyed not from unmingled sweetness.

"I am afraid it is the increasing heat, and that when the summer comes it will try you yet more. What do you think of going away from here, and living at Killowen a little, or are you not enough accustomed to being my wife yet?" said Lord Killowen with a courteous smile, for the first time referring to the little speech she had made to him when he had announced his diplomatic appointment to her, and she had expressed her satisfaction with it.

"I feel as if we had been married for years," replied Kathleen, rising and going to the window. "How terribly oppressive it is to-night!"

"You certainly seem to feel the heat very much," said Lord Killowen, watching her with jealous eyes, for he did not like such a breach of the etiquettes as this abrupt departure from the dinner-table. "But in that case let us go to Killowen,

there is nothing that need detain us here." It seemed to Kathleen that any change would be a relief; and so a month after they had made up their minds to do so. They left for ever the place where Lord Killowen said they had both found so much happiness. Kathleen would have told a different story.

It was still spring time in England when they arrived there; the borders in the parks were but just beginning to be gaudy with tulips, and the lilacs and laburnums were still making London fragrant, and gladdening it with their fresh beauty. Balls and parties were going on as usual, and the season was whirling its resistless course. How Kathleen hated it all. Just as she had never realized the oppression of her husband's presence till he had left her, so she had never realized her own misery till now, when she had returned to her old haunts. She wished to leave

London on the instant—she even prayed her husband to let her do so, to let her go down to Killowen alone, if he had business he must first arrange in town; but Lord Killowen would not hear of this: he could not think of her returning to her old home alone, and he was resolute that she must no longer put off being presented at court as his wife, so she stayed in town. The Fates decreed it so, as Kathleen thought.

She met the men she had flirted with before her marriage, and it was not so easy for her to keep them at a distance by her matronly airs, as the new acquaintances, she had met with at the Embassy; these men knew her of old. There was Georgie Longley; he no longer sang, "I'd marry you to-morrow, and take you right away!" He had a new song now, but it was quite as apropos as the old one had ever been; and he knew that Lady Killowen

had once been Kathleen O'Grady, though she seemed to have forgotten it herself. Kathleen struggled against it at first, but gradually all the old fast-flirting life came surging back upon her; and the time since she had been married seemed like a dreary dream; and the Embassy vanished into cloudland; and London alone became real to her; and she sat in the Row under the same tree, where she had carried on so many a flirtation of old, talking to the same men, wearing the same flowers in their button-holes, and making the same light comments on the same acquaintances. She was a married woman now, but it was difficult for her always to remember this. Georgie Longley did not seem to remember it; he did really, or he would not have been so unremitting in his attentions, for as he had said a year before, "he would not care to take shares in her," and he had seen no reason to alter his opinion

since then. But he seemed to Kathleen not to remember that she was married now. Why should she remember it either? for a time she did not.

One day, Lord Killowen said to her, "I do not like that Mr. Longley."

"He is amusing," said Kathleen, indifferently.

"You seem to find him so," Lord Killowen replied.

He needed to say no more; from that day, Lady Killowen pertinaciously snubbed Georgie Longley, till, after a few meetings, she had succeeded in making an enemy for life of the generally good-humoured young millionaire; but she did not care. She was a married woman now, and she must remember it or die. Talking to Georgie Longley, she had somewhat forgotten this: he must be punished accordingly, and he was so punished; but after this punishment, Lord Killowen was

no longer so unwilling to leave town. He saw that Kathleen was very incautious, and he feared that, through her want of caution, he might himself obtain the reputation of a jealous husband. He had tried to check her once, to moderate her pace as it were; but gentle though the check had been in his own estimation, it seemed to have brought Kathleen to a full stop.

On a sudden Kathleen had become icy towards the men of her acquaintance; certainly, she must have been very nervous as to her success in pleasing her husband, thus at once to forget all the knowledge of the world that her long intercourse with it had taught her, and to behave like a country girl suddenly brought from seclusion, who had at first lost her head in the London whirl, and now knew no way of showing penitence for a first imprudence but by at once flying into the opposite extreme, and reviving the stiffly

ceremonious manners of the age of brocades and powder, amidst the total want of ceremony of our present crinolines and muslins. Lord Killowen saw that something had gone wrong, and that, for some reason or other, Kathleen was incapable of piloting herself as dexterously as he would have expected. She had ventured among the breakers; now, if to escape from them, she gained for him the reputation of a jealous husband, he felt as if his bark would be wrecked indeed—that bark which he had hitherto steered so deftly, tacking whenever occasion demanded, but never going out of his course for any one. Lord Killowen could risk no such wrecking, and not many days elapsed before he and Kathleen had left town and gone down to Killowen.

Kathleen had said, when she had been about to marry her husband, that she did not wish to go down to Killowen till she had so

long been his wife that she might be quite accustomed to the idea, and so better able to begin a new life there; but she laughed sadly to herself as she now recalled these words. She knew now that her life at her old home would be just the Embassy life over again. Not a new life! oh, no, such an unutterably old life instead.

CHAPTER VI.

LORD KILLOWEN'S WIFE.

Lord and Lady Killowen came down to Killowen, and took possession of the Castle, which had been a home to each of them separately before now, but never yet to both together. They went on with all the schemes of improvement that Lord Killowen had already set going during his previous residence there; and Kathleen visited the schools, and inspected the model cottages, and admired the model farm, and then shut herself up in her own little boudoir, and was so weary of her life, that she could have died for very weariness. She drove in the large new barouche, and paid formal morning calls,

hardly even able to feel glad when she heard the answer, "Not at home;" but taking care that that should be the answer always given at Killowen when the visits were returned. She did not wish to see her neighbours. "I have enough of them, God knows, when I have to dine with them, and ask them to dine with me. Why should my life be made more a burden to me than it is? I dare say they are glad enough to find me out, poor souls!"

Thus it was that Kathleen excused herself in her own thoughts, when one day Lord Killowen actually ventured to remonstrate with her on her want of courtesy towards the county generally; but she did not excuse herself to her husband. What would be the use? she was tired of trying to please him; she had lived in the same house with him for months now, but she had never yet won any real love from him—not any love that she could

count upon, and she was sick and weary with her efforts.

She would sit for hours now before the glass looking at herself, wondering how long it would be before her beauty would be quite faded, and people would find it as difficult to believe she had ever possessed any, as she had found it herself in looking at many a wrinkled, withered old woman, who had, nevertheless, been a sort of Venus in her time. There was a picture of Kathleen downstairs, which had been taken by a great artist when she was only seventeen. Many people had considered it flattering at the time, but it had always been pronounced very like her; and Kathleen looked at it now, and fancied that was what she had been, and then looked at herself in the glass, and wondered how long it would be before it would all go—the bloom from her cheeks, the gloss from her hair, and the lustre from her eyes. Then she would

take down a volume of poetry, and read it—not one of the grand old masters, but one of the morbidly passionate poets of these latter days; and then, as in the middle of one of the most pathetic passages a carriage drove up to the door, she would congratulate herself that she had ordered that no visitors should be admitted. But one day she did not hear the carriage stop, and then roll away again, as usual; it stopped altogether, and a few minutes after there came a knock at the door, and a footman entered.

"Mrs. and the Misses Lawley are in the drawing-room, my lady."

"Did you not say, 'Not at home'?" said Kathleen, angrily.

"It was my lord's orders, that any one who came to-day was to be shown in to your ladyship."

"Oh, yes, I remember," said Kathleen, quickly. "My lord thinks I am getting

moped by seeing so few people. It is a mistake, but say I will be down directly. I had forgotten."

Then, as the footman left her, she rose up and sleeked her hair before the glass, while her lip curled proudly. "It is coming," she said bitterly, "yes, not a year yet, and it is coming Oh, what will Sandy think of me? But I would have made a good wife to the man I loved. I never was sure of it before, but I am sure of it now." Then she went downstairs, and entertained her visitors.

Kathleen was not going to give up without a struggle, she had tired of trying to please her husband of late, but she would begin again now; yes she would fight it out to the last. Sandy should not hear that she had disgraced herself, if she could help it; so she went out into the garden, and waited for Lord Killowen, who, as she conjectured,

was probably over at the Home Farm, and would be returning soon. She was right in her conjecture, and as soon as she saw him, she advanced to meet him. If it had been Sandy she had married, and he had given orders that her visitors should be admitted, when she had refused to see them, she would have avoided meeting him for a little, or if she had gone out to meet him, it would have been to overwhelm him at once with her reproaches; but as it was Lord Killowen she had married, she went forward to meet him with a smile, and passed her arm through his in lovely wifely fashion.

"You have come back earlier than I expected. I was coming to meet you, it is quite a long time since I have been at the farm."

"Yes, I do not like to take you there in this heat, you look fagged as it is."

"Yes, I know I look hideous," said

Kathleen with her sweetest expression, "but, dear Killowen, who would not look fagged with such an afternoon as you prepared for me to-day? I have been entertaining Mrs. and the three Misses Lawley for the last hour or more."

"Oh, did the Lawleys call to-day?" said Lord Killowen, indifferently.

"Yes, and you had given orders they should be admitted. It was very naughty of you not to tell me, and I would have got up some ideas; as it was I was taken quite at a disadvantage. I suppose you thought I was getting moped, and wanted some variety?"

"Yes," said Lord Killowen, rather pleased to have this explanation suggested to him, "that is just it. I think you require some amusement. This life is a change to you, you see, and you get bored with such quiet as we are living in."

"Oh, no, dear Killowen, it is just what I

like. I had such a rackety life as a girl, that I think I deserve a little rest as a married woman; and the farm, and the village, and all your improvements give me quite as much amusement as I wish for."

"I am glad to hear it, but you don't seem to consider that you make yourself remarkable by seeing no one. People think there is some reason for it, and they talk in a manner in which I do not at all like that my wife should be talked off."

"Dear Killowen, why did not you tell me so before?" cried Kathleen. "I never thought—I am afraid I am foolish about such things, and I know you said you wished me to see more people the other day, but I thought it was on my own account. I never fancied you cared, or I would have done anything. Let us do something at once now. I cannot tell you how grieved I am to have vexed you;" and Kathleen's bosom

heaved, and the large tears shone in her eyes, and her cheeks flushed just as they had been wont to flush before her marriage; and Lord Killowen could not but think she looked very beautiful, and he saw too that it was really Kathleen O'Grady whom he had married. Sometimes he could hardly believe this himself, the young Lady Killowen was so different.

"You have not vexed me, my dear," he said, "I am only anxious for your reputation, perhaps, over anxious; but you know what is said about Cæsar's wife."

"Yes, yes," said Kathleen, hurriedly. "Oh, those horrid gossips. Let us do something to stop their mouths at once. Let us give a breakfast party, and ask Sybil and her husband over to stay for it, and fill the house with people, and show all the world how happy we are, that they may never be able to talk again."

"I am afraid people will always talk, whatever one may do," said Lord Killowen, still as composedly as ever, though he could not but be a trifle touched by his wife's agitation; "and as to a breakfast party, the distances are hardly very suitable for that, and I don't think it is the sort of thing people would care for here. If you like to ask Lord and Lady Faversham for a night or two, of course I shall be very glad; he and I disagree about a good many things, but I daresay we can manage not to quarrel, and Lady Faversham is a charming woman."

"Yes, dear Sybil, I have always been so fond of her. She has been a good friend to me for so many years."

"And she is a good wife and mother. I am glad that she is your friend, Kathleen; she is the sort of woman I like you to associate with. Yes, ask them here by all means. As to filling the house, that seems

to me hardly desirable at this time of year. But here is Davey, I want to speak to him about that colt that is for sale."

And Lord Killowen went to speak about the colt, and Kathleen went into the house, and into her boudoir, and shut and locked the door, and threw herself upon the sofa, and rolled on it in her misery. Then the dressing-bell rang, and she hurried to dress for dinner; for Lord Killowen could not bear any one to be late, and she was determined to make herself look beautiful that night.

She did indeed look beautiful; she glanced at the picture of herself when she was seventeen, as she entered the large drawing-room, and then she glanced proudly at her own reflection in the mirror, and saw it was yet more beautiful. Yes, who would care to look at that pretty girl, with the laughing eyes, and rosy cheeks, that even dulled the roses in her hair—who would care to look at

that hardly yet rounded figure in the white muslin frock, while that beautiful woman in amber and diamonds stood before it, with the tears almost brimming over eyes now so surcharged with feeling, and a snowy neck with soft graceful undulating curves, such as the eye delighted to rest upon. She looked like a woman to conquer or to die, and when Lord Killowen entered the room, he could not but think he had never seen his wife so beautiful.

"I wonder you wear those diamonds, when we are alone though," he said, after he had paid her a well-worded little compliment upon her appearance.

"Because I care most to look well in my husband's eyes, and I know I never look so well as when lighted up by a few diamonds," replied Kathleen, determined to take everything *au mieux*.

"Indeed you require no lighting up," said

Lord Killowen, politely; "it is you who give a brilliance to the diamonds," and then they went in to dinner. Lord and Lady Faversham were not able to come quite at first to Killowen, but after a little adjusting of plans, and a good many notes going backwards and forwards, they accepted Kathleen's invitation.

Sybil was very curious to see Kathleen as a wife. Hitherto they had not met, except at one large dinner-party at a house half-way between the two; then Kathleen had looked very beautiful in black velvet and yellow roses, but Sybil had fancied her looking older than a year had any right to make her; however, she had felt that it was impossible to judge of this seeing her only for one night and in society, and she was the more anxious to see her friend in her old home. At first Lady Faversham was much pleased by what she saw, though considerably surprised. Kathleen began by showing off the new schools, as if

they were *the* lion of the place; she then drove Sybil over in her pony-carriage to the model farm; but Sybil though it was some years now since she had lived abroad, had never been able to take to farming, and did not show much interest in the prize pigs nor even in the wonderful Alderneys, though she pronounced them pretty and just like Faversham's. As to the short-horns, Lady Faversham would not even look at them, though Kathleen strove to point out one that was considered perfect in rib and hind quarter, and with only the slightest possible hollow in the back, that they quickly left the farm, and then Kathleen took Sybil over the model cottages, which Lady Faversham seemed to find much more interesting, inquiring into all their arrangements, and making great friends with the children. She was surprised though to find how little popular Kathleen seemed here, she knew all the names of the people,

and asked them after their different ailments, but though they answered her questions very respectfully, it was Lord Killowen of whom they spoke with gratitude. However, as it was he who had built the cottages, Sybil supposed this was natural, and she knew Kathleen had never been accustomed to go among the people as a girl, so probably they did not quite understand her doing so now. The wonder was that she knew so much about them.

Kathleen surprised Lady Faversham also by her affectionately submissive manner to her husband. Now Lady Faversham dearly loved her husband, and was quite of the opinion that it was a wife's duty to obey, but she did not think it at all inconsistent with this opinion to differ from her husband sometimes about various little trifling matters, and occasionally, indeed, to carry out her own ideas rather than his; but Kathleen, she

observed, appealed to Lord Killowen on every possible occasion, and professed to have arranged even the knick-knacks in her boudoir, according to his advice. Kathleen wore cherry-coloured ribbons in the day, and affected yellow at night, because "they are my lord's favourite colours," she said. Now Sybil really did not in the least care how she looked to any one but her husband, but she had only one blue dress and bonnet, though she knew blue was his favourite colour for the day, and as to what he liked best at night, she was ashamed to find out now that she really did not remember.

She said something of this one evening to Lord Faversham, but the young Earl smiled proudly, "My wife knows that I love her, she has not to be thinking each minute of the day whether she is pleasing in my eyes."

"But, Faversham, which colour do you really like best."

"Whichever you happen to have on," he replied, provokingly; and Sybil, though she knew he must have an opinion on the subject, yet was obliged to be satisfied with this answer, and determined to learn her husband's taste by watching, since he would not tell her what it was for asking.

But before the second day was over, Sybil had an insight into another side of Kathleen's character. They were sitting in the latter's boudoir together, Kathleen filling up school reports in the most business like manner, and Sybil making some embroidery which she intended for her eldest child, when after there had been a silence between them for some time, only broken by Kathleen's steady writing, Sybil looked up. "I am so surprised by you, Kathleen, I never should have thought you would have taken to such a quiet life."

"Should not you?" said Kathleen, going

on with her writing without looking up. "What should you have expected me to have done."

"Well, I never could think what you would do, when you married, but I suppose I expected that you would go on in much the same gay way that you did before, filling your house with people and entertaining all the County."

"Perhaps I might have," said Kathleen, "if——" and then she closed her lips firmly, and went on with her writing.

"If what?" said Sybil, who was busy with her work, and did not see the change in her friend's face.

"If I had married a man I loved," said Kathleen, bitterly.

"Oh, dear Kathleen, do not say that, please, besides it is absurd. If you had married a man you loved, as you say, why the more you loved him, the less you would have cared about any other society."

"And the less should I have feared it then; but no, Sybil, you are wrong. Naturally I am very fond of society."

"Why do you not have more then? I always used to think we were very staid, quiet people at Faversham; but you are far quieter here."

"Oh, Faversham is like the world, compared to this place," replied Kathleen, lightly, closing up the books she had now finished, and sitting down on a low chair beside her friend. "What pretty work you are doing, Sybil, and you mean to give it to that wretched child. Don't be angry, I know she is a great darling to any one who cares for children; but it does seem a waste. So you cannot understand being afraid of society?"

"No; I understand not caring about it," said Lady Faversham, with a happy smile, stroking her friend's rich golden hair.

"And I can't understand that; I should

always care for it, if I were happy, and I only shun it now because I am miserable, and I might any day see a man I liked better than my husband; and he knows I might, and would be very ready to suspect me, and I *will* not have that. I *will* not, I would die sooner. I will not have Sandy scorn me, and say I was all very well as a cousin; but as a wife—— I *could* have made a good wife to him, I know I could, though nobody believes it. Oh, let us go into the garden, Sybil, this room is so hot, and what is the use of talking?"

"What, indeed!" After that Sybil did not take much more pleasure in her friend's society; she was fond of Kathleen still—fond of her, and very sorry for her—but she had no longer any pleasure in talking to her, and she was glad when the day came for her and her husband to leave Faversham.

"It seems so strange, now, to think that

I should once have wished Kathleen to marry you," said Lady Faversham to her husband, as they drove away together, for the railway was no use between Killowen and Faversham, and this it was that made the distance so very unmanageable. "I wonder if she would have been any happier with you?"

"She would hardly have made me such a good wife, I should think," replied Lord Faversham.

"Do you think she makes Lord Killowen a good wife, now?"

"Yes; don't you?" said he, half surprised. "I never saw such a wonderful change in any one, she seems invaluable to him, and Killowen is very much improved by it. He used to be rather priggish."

Then Sybil leant back and thought that the little play that had been played out before them, during the last few days, had not been altogether thrown away; it had been success-

ful, at least as regarded one person. And she saw no use in enlightening her husband, so she said no more about the friends they had left; but talked about the home to which they were returning, and the pleasure of the children at seeing them return, and such household matters.

CHAPTER VII.

A SCRAP OF PAPER.

Kathleen had worked hard during those few days that Lord and Lady Faversham had spent at Killowen, and she was rewarded by her husband's approbation. He was gratified by her behaviour, and she saw that he was gratified, as though she had worked so hard to accomplish this result, she was almost angry now that she had brought it about. She despised Lord Killowen for being pleased. It might be all very well for Lord Faversham to go away believing that she was a loved and loving wife, and that Killowen Castle was one of the "happy homes of England;" but it was too contemptible that Lord Killowen

should be blinded by the little play. Kathleen knew that her husband was clever, that he had been considered more than usually acute in diplomacy, and that his opinion was greatly respected in the County; but it never occurred to her now to remember this, and to think that he might be playing a part on his own account, that he might consider it for his interest to appear pleased, and might in reality be no more blinded than she was as to the state of her feelings. That it might indeed be she who was blinded, and did not know with what eyes he regarded her.

Kathleen's love for Sandy was growing almost into a monomania now. She heard nothing of him in these days, he was in England somewhere she knew; but where, she had no idea, and she did not trouble herself much about that. But she would spend hours thinking of him—what his thoughts might be about, whom he cared for now, whether

he was happy or not. She never asked herself whether it were not wrong to think so much about him. She went to church very regularly on Sundays, and she worked in the parish, and took a lead in schemes of general benevolence; but she was not at heart one whit more religious or conscientious than she had been in the old days, when her life had been one round of pleasure from morning to night, unmixed with a single duty, and with a general colouring of flirtation pervading all. She had flirted then, simply because it was her nature, and she had got into a way of so doing. For the same reason she now thought of Sandy Beaumont; but not the less did she go on with her daily occupations, not the less did she smile at her husband across the breakfast table, or get up laboriously all the suggestions in the papers for the contentment of Ireland. She told herself she would do her duty by her husband, not

because she thought it right so to do; but because it was the last fancy she had taken into her head, and because she thought Sandy would scorn her if she did not.

"He would be very kind," Kathleen said to herself. "Sandy is hard sometimes; but if every one else was cruel, he would be very kind, terribly kind. I had rather be trampled under foot by any one else, than have Sandy kind to me in that way. But he shall see I can do my duty by my husband, though I did not marry him for love."

And Kathleen believed she was doing her duty by her husband. Sometimes as she wandered through the large rooms at Killowen, looking somewhat ghostly in the moonlight, she would think of her mother, who had, as she knew, never loved her father, and had come to Killowen younger than herself, and all unused to a fine lady-life of luxury. And Kathleen wondered whether she had found

it as difficult to play a wifely part, as her daughter now did; or whether the novelty of her position had made up at all for the want of love, and cruel compulsion by which she had been forced to accept a coronet and a wife's duties, instead of her previous loneliness and poverty.

"She always used to say that, having to be idle all day long, made it worse," said Kathleen to herself, "but I do not think I should be any happier for having to wait upon myself, and tidy up my own room. If I did think so, I would try it at once, though Killowen would think I had gone mad, I suppose. Poor mother! I have often wondered how she felt, but I never felt so sorry for her as I do now. I wish I could have her here to stay with me, but she hates the place so; and then she would talk about Sandy, and I could not bear it. No, she is quite right, it is better for us not to meet as

yet; but she must be very lonely, poor mother. I wonder if any one will ever love me again, as much as she has loved me all her life; and I wonder if I shall ever love any one as well? But there is nothing I would not do for Sandy." Then she went into the study to ask Lord Killowen if he would not take a walk with her in the garden. There was such lovely moonlight, and she was sure he was tiring himself with those law papers of his.

Lord Killowen looked a little suprised; no one had ever asked him before to take a turn in the moonlight, and he was not quite the kind of man to care to do so; so he said he had not quite finished his business, and Kathleen went out to indulge in much the same sort of thought as that which she had been indulging in before.

One day her thoughts received a new turn, in the same direction still, certainly,

but yet a new turn. She received a little note from Sybil, and at the end of the little note, there was written. "You will be surprised to hear who is coming to stay with us —Mr. Beaumont; he says his last account from Australia have not been very satisfactory, and he is going out there again, but would like to see Faversham before starting, so we have asked him to come here for as long a visit as he can spare time for."

So she might see him again! For a few days, at least, he would be living in the neighbourhood; it would be strange, almost unfriendly, if Lord Killowen did not ask him to come to them for a night or two. Sandy would not come, of that Kathleen felt sure; but still she might see him, she must do so. She would see Sandy, and die, she said to herself. She began to have an awful feeling that this was what she had been living for all this time, that Sandy might come over

some day, and pay her a morning call like any other mere acquaintance, and admire the horses and cows, and go away again after an hour or two, and then it would be all over. Since the Favershams had stayed at Killowen, she decided it was, after all, not too great a distance to manage in the day. Of course, they would come over to luncheon, and bring Sandy with them; and then he would go to Australia, and it would not matter what might happen to her then. Sandy might never hear of it, and Kathleen's tears flowed fast.

That letter of Sybil's had come by the afternoon's post, and she did not meet Lord Killowen till dinner-time; then he asked her if she had had any news by the post, and among other letters, she mentioned Sybil's, and told how Sandy Beaumont was expected to stay at Faversham.

"I am sorry he is coming just now," said

Lord Killowen, "for I find I shall have to go away on business for a little, possibly only to Dublin; but I may have to go on to London."

"I am very sorry," said Kathleen, so gravely, that Lord Killowen looked up at her across the table; but the servants were in the room, and so he did not ask her what she meant, and, indeed, Kathleen looked as if she did not mean anything, while she went on eating her soup without raising her eyes.

"That will prevent our having him over here to stay," said Lord Killowen, after a minute's pause, during which he had meditated over his wife's last words.

"I don't suppose he would have time for that," said Kathleen. "No, thank you, not any fish," and the fish was carried away.

"Possibly not," continued Lord Killowen, in the same unmoved voice; "but I

should have liked to show him that amount of civility. As it is, you can only ask him over for the day; but I should like you to write at once to Lady Faversham, and arrange that before he comes down, as you say he may not have much time."

"I will write after dinner, if you like."

There the conversation dropped; but Kathleen thought to herself, "If he knew—if he only knew!" It never occurred to her that perhaps Lord Killowen might know.

She wrote her invitation that evening, and it was soon arranged that Lady Faversham should bring Sandy over to luncheon the first day after his arrival. The days were shortening in now, and it might be a cold drive home, so Lord Faversham would not accompany them; but Sybil said she did not think it would be too much for her, and she answered for Sandy.

"Don't you think you could put off going

a little," said Kathleen, as she read Sybil's note to her husband. "It is not so very necessary for you to attend that particular meeting, is it? And I should like you to know Sandy better."

"It would give me great pleasure," replied her husband; "unfortunately I cannot alter my arrangements now; but if I do not go further than Dublin, I may be in time to catch him before he leaves this part of the country; and in the other case, we may very likely meet in town."

"I wish you would take me to town with you."

"You did not like it so much when you were last there; why do you wish to return now?"

"I don't know. I should like to be with you."

"Are you afraid of being left alone, Kathleen?" asked Lord Killowen, looking at her

full in the face in a manner most unusual to him, for though it could never be said of Lord Killowen that he shunned any man's eyes, still it could very rarely be said of him that he looked any one full in the face.

"Oh, no—not afraid," she faltered, the colour, which she tried to force back, almost burning her cheeks. "But do not be angry with me, Killowen," and she got up and hung upon the arm of his chair, laying one hand upon his shoulder as she spoke. "I have a terrible feeling about this journey of yours, and I wish you would take me with you."

"*Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens*, and some people prefer the latter," muttered Lord Killowen between his teeth, with a bitter smile curling his thin lips. These were the only words he ever spoke showing he did not believe his wife loved him, but Kathleen did not understand Latin, and in a

moment he had turned to her with his usual suave politeness. "My dear, this anxiety is very natural; you are not well, this summer has quite knocked you up, but do not be uneasy, even you cannot apprehend any danger from my going to Dublin for a few days, and if I find I am obliged to go on to London, I will send for you. I promise it."

Then Kathleen kissed him and thanked him, and had to pretend to be quite satisfied, but she wrung her hands as she shut herself into her boudoir. "He will do it," she said—"he will go and leave me, and I shall feel so light and happy, I shall be sure to commit myself, but Sandy will take no notice of it, so what does it matter? for nobody else will be the wiser, and *he* knows well enough already."

But that night, as they sat at dinner together, Lord Killowen startled Kathleen a little. The servants were gone, and they

had drawn their chairs in to the fire, for the days were shortening now, and the evenings already began to be chilly. Lord Killowen was peeling her a walnut; Kathleen always hated to have walnuts peeled for her, and felt she would rather eat them with the skins on than see somebody else turning them round and round, and poking into all their little holes and corners; but Lord Killowen liked to be very polite to his wife, and so he persisted in peeling walnuts for her. This night he had peeled several, and Kathleen had already received three little white-stripped mouthfuls, and eaten them with pretty expressions of gratitude, and entreaties that he would not take so much trouble for her, when Lord Killowen, without pausing in the peeling of the fourth walnut, or even looking up at her, asked—

"Whom did you wish to marry, when you married me, Kathleen?"

"I wished to marry you," she replied, with an icy feeling at her heart, as if now it was coming—now it must be really coming.

"Indeed!" said Lord Killowen, politely, but evidently attaching no credence to her words. "You have sometimes seemed to regret it, so I thought there might possibly be somebody else," and he handed her the walnut he had at last completed preparing. Kathleen took it, almost choking with indignation.

"Indeed, Killowen, when have I ever said or done anything ——"

"You have never said or done anything, my dear," replied her husband, quite calmly. "Do not distress yourself. I do not blame you in the least. Only you forget you never professed to love me when you married me, so I thought there might have been somebody else."

"There was no one," said Kathleen, hoarsely.

"Really—not that Mr. Longley, for instance?"

"Georgie Longley!" cried Kathleen in a tone of contempt such as must have convinced the most jealous of husbands.

Lord Killowen was not in the least jealous, and he seemed only to have thrown out the last name as a venture. "Yet there was surely some one," he went on, "whose assistance you would have preferred in your difficulties? I am always afraid that I may have taken an unfair advantage of your position, and that ——"

"You were most kind, most generous," said Kathleen, and she took hold of the hand that was nearest her, and pressed it for a moment, as if in gratitude.

Lord Killowen took her fondling very quietly. "I am glad to hear you say so.

Sometimes I have feared that there was, at that time, a slight misunderstanding between you and your cousin Sandy."

"We had quarrelled, that was all," said Kathleen, staring at the coals without even blinking, though her eyes ached with the effort, but not so much as her heart. That pain in her eyeballs was a relief to the agonized palpitations of her heart, which was beating so fast and so loudly, she thought she could hear its beats, and she dreaded lest her husband should hear them too. "He quarrelled with me years and years ago, before ever he went to Australia, and we have never been friends since."

"Indeed; you have never been friends with each other since then! Well, of course, that makes it rather unpleasant for you to have him over here whilst I am away. I am sorry I asked you to invite him, but Lady Faversham will keep the peace, and he is a

good sort of fellow at bottom, I believe, though he does seem a little rough. We may as well go into the other room now."

Then they went into the drawing-room, and Kathleen took up a novel, and blistered the pages with large tears at the thought of Sandy Beaumont being called a good sort of fellow by Lord Killowen. "A little rough, too! as if every one did not know that Sandy had the kindest, tenderest heart—would not hurt the feelings even of a worm;" and Lord Killowen's wife glanced up at him writing by a lamp with a green shade, and took a sort of pleasure in seeing how ugly he looked with that green light cast upon him, for she felt as if she hated those smooth, regular features and well-cut whiskers, and, above all, perhaps, that white, womanish hand, with which he wrote—wrote—wrote. "Much good his writing would do," she should think; "very likely he was to improve the world! He

had better improve himself first, and grow a little more like that Sandy Beaumont whom he condemned as rough, though he did believe him to be good at bottom. Good at bottom! I should think he was—he is good as gold," thought Kathleen, and then she threw down her book and ran upstairs and cried as if her heart would break to think how very good Sandy was, and how very bad she still remained, and should she ever grow more like him, or would there always remain the same distance between them.

Lord Killowen looked up as she returned to the drawing-room; Kathleen noticed that he did so, but she did not notice that his brows knitted slightly as he did so, nor relaxed any more that evening. She recollected it afterwards.

Next day, when her husband left her, Kathleen hung upon him, and kissed him again and again before she could bring her-

self to say good-bye, and Lord Killowen kissed her also, but very coldly as she thought even then. He promised he would send for her to accompany him if he went on to town, and then she insisted on going with him to see him get into the dog-cart and drive away. There was his servant, who was going with him, getting up behind, and there was the groom holding the horse, and the butler also came out to see that "my lord" had everything he could want; and Kathleen thought Lord Killowen looked so cold and stiff because he was afraid of her repeating her affectionate farewell, and as she knew he hated any demonstrations of affection before spectators, so she was not distressed by his coldness, only it restrained her from going to the carriage, and she remained upon the door-step watching him get in. Only as Lord Killowen put his foot upon the step, he looked over his shoulder.

"You have dropped something, Kathleen," he said, and he walked back to her, and picking up a letter lying at her feet, handed it to her. He looked at her as he did so, then he turned away, and got into the dog-cart and drove off.

Kathleen stared at the letter she held in her hand in blank bewilderment; she knew well enough what it was. It was the letter Sandy Beaumont had written to Lord Killowen, thanking him for his suggestion that he should stand for the County, and which Lord Killowen had lost, as he thought at the time, so mysteriously but a short time after receiving it. Kathleen had known well enough where the letter was: it had never left her since she had first seen it, till two days before this morning she had missed it. She had always carried it about with her as a sort of talisman; and she had fretted at first when she found she had

lost it, but then she had consoled herself thinking she should soon see Sandy himself again now. She must have dropped it somewhere or other, and it was so old and worn-looking now that any one who picked it up would probably throw it into the waste-paper basket or into the fire, still she had hunted for it a little, but unsuccessfully. Now, she wondered how it had got to the hall-door. Then, again, she recalled her husband's glance as he had handed it to her—so cold, so hard, yet sorrowful somewhat. "He could not know what it was," thought Kathleen, in an agony of self-accusation, "he never even glanced at it;" but then she called to mind that it was as he looked over his shoulder, not after he had looked, that he had said, "You have dropped something, Kathleen." Yes, he must have put it there himself; she should have seen it if it had been there when she walked through the hall.

She recollected he had stood beside her for a moment upon the door-step, and he had appeared pre-occupied about something. Surely, she remembered he had seemed to drop something then; he must have dropped this letter; none of the servants would have been so careless as to leave an old letter laying upon the door-step when their master and mistress were going to pass out. If he had dropped it there, it must previously have been in his possession, and he must know what it was, probably where it came from. How long had he had it? Was it that which had set him questioning her yesterday? Had he been about to set her free if she had owned to loving Sandy better than himself? Kathleen laughed as this last idea presented itself to her. "Does he remember hunting for that letter, I wonder," she asked herself, "and my pretending to help him? Ah, well; he can never believe

me again, anyhow; he knows well how utterly false I am now. Oh, Sandy, when will you go back to Australia? Why will you delay so? I won't be shamed before you; I won't, I won't." Then she laughed wildly. "Very fine for me to say this, it is for Killowen to decide now. God knows, if I spoke the truth, I should tell him that I rather hated than loved him, but I would kneel at his feet to make him keep me as his wife. Only he would not care, he is stone—stone; I might cry my very heart out, and he would say, "Allow me to prevail upon you to dry your tears," or one of those terribly formal speeches of his; but as to doing what I wanted, as to granting me what I asked for——Oh, but I am wicked—wicked; he is not what I am fancying him," she cried, with a sudden revulsion of feeling; "he was kind and generous to me once, and he would be so again, as far as it

lay in his power. Why, otherwise, did he not give me the lie yesterday, when I tried to cheat him, as I have tried to cheat him all along? Why, otherwise, did he not hand me the letter at once, instead of in that roundabout way, making believe I had dropped it that instant, and that he had never seen it before? That is his idea of delicacy, oh, I know it is, and he meant it for kindness; he wished that I should not have the pain of thinking that he knew what it was, and it is only because he is too much of a gentleman to be a good actor that I know he has seen it, thought about it, grieved over it. For he has grieved over it, I know he has, though he has never really loved me, or he would have given me the letter directly he found it, and asked me, in a rage, what I meant by carrying it about with me. But he has never loved me, and I have never loved

him, and he knows I have not, and he knows, too, now what a horrid hypocrite I have been; and, gentleman that he is, he must loathe and despise me, and God only knows what will become of me. But I will not say it is Killowen's fault," she added, angrily, pausing in her hasty walk up and down the long, grand drawing-room, and standing before the picture of herself at seventeen, the picture which she so hated, that she would gladly have hidden it away in some dark garret, or burnt it, if Lord Killowen would only have let her, but he would not; and she hated the picture the more because she believed it was through looking at it that he had first learnt to desire herself as his wife. "It is not Killowen's fault," she went on with that generosity which always seemed lurking somewhere or other in some far-away corner of Kathleen's heart, however ungenerous her outward actions might

be; "it is all because I have been wicked all through, only doing what I chose at the moment, because I chose, and never loving any one I had a right to love, but always some one else; and now I only pray that I may die soon, for God knows I shall never grow any better. I was as wicked then," and pointing angrily at the laughing girlish face in the picture, "as I am now, and I am as wicked now as I was then, neither better nor worse, and I believe I shall never alter."

And Kathleen fell down upon her knees beside her picture, and leant her arms upon an ottoman, and buried her face in her hands and sobbed bitterly, till she sobbed herself to sleep, worn out by her own misery.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW LORD KILLOWEN TOOK IT.

As the train puffed, snorted, and sometimes shrieked along its way to Dublin, Lord Killowen systematically arranged his papers, and made himself master of the contents of those which he had not previously looked at. These were mostly in that pretty, almost flowery, handwriting so well known to all the young Lady Killowen's friends, and written on the delicately-perfumed paper, which she so habitually used, that this scent seemed almost like a part of herself, and without it they would hardly have recognized the writing. Lord Killowen read all these pretty perfumed documents carefully through, but

as he passed away the last he sighed rather more heavily, than even this subject which he had been so laboriously getting up, seemed to require. He was going up to Dublin for a grand meeting to establish a co-operative store, to be entirely self supporting of course, but intended solely for the use of the lower orders, and to which no one was to be permitted to apply except those under a certain rental. Lord Killowen was the originator of this scheme, and had for long exerted himself to set it in action, besides being ready to go to London to make arrangements with some wholesale houses there, should it be necessary, but the matter was progressing well now, its original opponents had been talked over, and there was nothing to call forth that heavy sigh with which he put away his last paper, having carefully and neatly folded it, and shutting it into his travelling bag with a snap, turned and looked out of the window.

There was nothing very inviting in the prospect, nor was Lord Killowen much given to admiring the beauties of nature; he had, as usual, when travelling, provided himself with enough of the literature of the day to employ him during a dozen such journeys, as the one he was now taking. There were also two other occupants of this first-class carriage, and one of Lord Killowen's maxims was never to lose an opportunity of obtaining information from any one with whom chance might bring him into contact, but he did not now enter into conversation with either of these temporary neighbours, nor did he take forth one of his neatly-bound little volumes, Vivid's last published volume of speeches, or Ruskin's "Lectures on Political Economy," nor, easier still, did he unfold the day's paper. He remained steadily looking out of the window; Lord Killowen was not a man of a lively imagination, yet as he looked out of

that window he did not see the hedges, and untidy cottages, the doll's garden and neat stucco villas past which the train hurried him along, it was an imaginary prospect that he was contemplating—a prospect that never had nor ever would have an existence in the world of real life, but which seemed a great deal more real to Lord Killowen just then, than those real houses and fields and gardens, which his bodily eyes were seeing, but which his mental eye was too much pre-occupied to perceive.

Lord Killowen was looking back upon his married life, yet with no feeling of regret after that first sigh with which he turned to the subject. It was a painful subject, and therefore he sighed; for he was now convinced that his marriage had been a mistake, and it was peculiarly disagreeable to a man of his temperament to have to confess this even to himself, but he was far too practical

to spend any time in regretting this mistake, or in meditating over the pain of it, as so many of us regret and meditate, and thus torture ourselves. Lord Killowen in marrying his cousin, Kathleen O'Grady, had believed himself to be marrying a girl who did not love him in the least, but who, finding herself in a position to require a husband, preferred him for a husband to any one else of her acquaintance. He had been quite willing to face a loveless marriage; for himself he loved Kathleen as much as he loved any one, but he despised the tender passion as he generally called it: he believed it to be very transitory, and thought it the less mattered to marry a wife, who did not love him, because even if she started by doing so, the feeling must of its own nature so soon pass. Though he loved Kathleen, as much as he could love, he would never have married her for this reason alone; he had arrived at the convic-

tion that he required a wife, and that of all the women, he knew she was the one best suited to him, perhaps love had had a little to do with this conviction, though if it had, Lord Killowen was himself entirely ignorant of this. But though prepared to marry a wife, who did not love himself, Lord Killowen had not been at all prepared to marry a wife, who already loved another, and that he had done this, he now felt convinced; and having arrived at this conviction he also said that he had made a mistake. The question remained how was he best to rectify it? And as he thus reflected, Lord Killowen contemplated his own recent conduct with some satisfaction, but not so his wife's.

He had picked up that letter, when Kathleen had dropped it. Seeing the untidy piece of paper lying on the ground, his natural love of order had immediately led him to walk across the room, and throw it into the waste-

paper basket, but as he was thus throwing it, the signature, Sandy Beaumont, caught his eye. He was holding the letter topsy turvy, but he could not fail even thus to recognize the large bold signature, nor to be caught by the date of the year which Sandy in accordance with a business fallacy of his had added to it. The day of the month was written smaller, he did not see in the first instance, nor had he tried to read it. It did not occur to him that this was Sandy's letter to himself at Constantinople; he knew he had no letter of this almost unknown cousin's, it must then have been his wife who had kept it—it was of course a letter to herself. He would restore it to her when she returned to the room; she must probably value it for some reason or other since she had kept it so long, and Lord Killowen laid it on the table beside him, and went on with his writing. As for prying into its contents such an idea never pre-

sented itself to him; he went on with his writing calmly as before, but as he looked up that large date of the year struck his eye again. "It is a long time to keep a short note like that," thought Lord Killowen, "if it was about anything important, I ought to have been told of it." Then he added up a column of figures. "This is wrong," he said, "Kathleen is very careless, she writes her noughts so like sixes, that she has made a mistake between them this time. I have often told her, she would do so some day. She ought to have put away that letter carefully docketed, if it was worth keeping so long. I shall tell her so." Then Lord Killowen glanced across the room at the spot where he had picked up the letter. She must have been carrying it in her pocket, he thought, but his colour rose as he thought this. Though he had never been troubled with love affairs on his own account, he knew

well enough what kind of letters they were that people kept a long time, and carried about on their persons.

"It may have been written before her marriage, but, anyhow, it equally shows that there has been something wrong. It cannot be with the fellow himself, surely. He must have written to her about somebody else."

And Lord Killowen knit his brows as he thought who this somebody else could be? The worst of it was, with a wife like Kathleen, he felt as if it might be anybody. Now Lord Killowen had almost loved his wife before marrying her, and since marrying her he had found her a greater source of comfort and pleasure than he had ever anticipated. Unconsciously he had grown to have a great respect for her talents, and a great admiration for her powers of amusing those she was thrown among. He was surprised himself now to find how pained he felt at this new dis-

covery he had made. He was surprised at himself, but nevertheless he felt he could not hand that letter back to his wife when she returned to the room. He would leave it lying on the table, and trust to her finding it in the course of the evening. She would retire for the night before he did, and thus, if she did find it, he would be sure to see how she looked on seeing it lying beside him. But Kathleen never noticed the letter. She came and stood beside her husband, and told him he was over-tiring himself, and asked if she could help him? And then she went to bed, and never distinguished that letter of Sandy's upon the paper-bestrewn table. Then Lord Killowen went to bed too, having put the letter in his pocket; for he could not leave it about for the servant to stumble upon. He did not know what it might not contain.

As it happened, all the next day Kathleen

was expressing her regret at her husband's leaving her, and also that Sandy Beaumont should be coming to spend the day during his absence; and while he listened, her husband was painfully conscious of that letter in his evening coat-pocket upstairs. Her reluctance to see Sandy during his absence convinced Lord Killowen that Sandy was aware of some old love affair which she wished forgotten. That it could be with himself he thought impossible, for he had been anything but prepossessed with Sandy on the one occasion on which he had seen him, and believed him to be of sterling merit, doubtless, but not at all the sort of man for a woman to find pleasing. Besides, if Kathleen had loved Sandy, why had she not married him long before she had ever seen himself? He recollected long ago hearing how Sandy Beaumont cared for no one but his beautiful cousin. Of course he had been

a hopeless lover, only too glad to do any service for the beloved object; and Kathleen had made him her confidant in some more promising love affair, which yet had come to nothing in the end. But then, whom could this other love affair have been with? Lord Killowen must find out. He had not been altogether satisfied with his wife's conduct of late. He had thought her looking ill for some time past. He had observed that, though she always talked to him when he was in the room, yet he almost always found her looking pre-occupied when he first entered the room, and, as often as not, doing nothing. He now concluded that she was grieving for this man whom she had loved—perhaps did still love. He decided that, by throwing her off her guard by the suddenness of his attack, he would find out who this other man was, and warn her that, though he was content not to be loved by her himself, he could

not submit to her bestowing her love on any other man. She was his wife, and she must be careful of his honour and her own.

In accordance with this idea, Lord Killowen questioned Kathleen, startling her very much by his abruptness; and she told him she had quarrelled long years before with Sandy Beaumont, and never been friends with him since. Her husband had his hand upon the letter, to give it to her, and ask her, not severely, but still with the determination to obtain an answer, why, then, this letter of his had been preserved through all these years? But, somehow, when it came to the point, he could not. Lord Killowen had never known himself to be so weak before; but Kathleen had looked so beautiful in her indignation, she had pressed his hand with such an appearance of feeling, that, though he knew that something at least of what she had been saying must be false—for, at the

time of marrying him, she had never professed to wish to do so for his own sake, yet he could not bear to hear her now own that there was another whom she had loved, did still love. Though he knew there must be some one, he yet preferred to wait a little in suspense before he heard who it was.

After dinner, Kathleen left him, and went upstairs; and then Lord Killowen thought he would seize the occasion of her absence to get rid of this letter that so plagued him. If warning could be of any avail, he had surely given her sufficient warning already. He would now destroy the letter, and think no more about it.

He drew out the letter to tear it to pieces, and, as he did so, he saw the beginning, "Dear Killowen." It was, then, to himself! He could have no further scruples as to reading it now. He read it. It was the letter about Sandy Beaumont's standing,

which he had missed, and which Kathleen had pretended to assist him in looking for. There was no allusion to herself in it; not even the most common-place message.

"She must love him very dearly, to have cared to keep this," thought Lord Killowen; and as he thus thought, his eye rested upon the tear-stains on the paper. Then Kathleen returned, and Lord Killowen had only just time, as he heard her step, to thrust the letter back into his pocket, before she entered. He could not quite tell how to speak to her of it now. He thought he must speak to her, but he must have a little time to think first.

The next day, however, he had to go away. Kathleen was very affectionate to him that morning; she was truly sorry her lord was going to leave her, but how much of her sorrow was assumed, her husband could not tell: only he hoped some of it was real, for he had grown very fond of her, though he did not

love her, not really, as Kathleen required to be loved. Twice he tried to screw his courage up to tell her of this letter he had found, twice his courage failed him at the last moment. Then in the end he had no more time, so he thought he would drop it where she would be sure to find it, and where she might possibly think he had placed it, and then he would leave her for a few days, as indeed he was now obliged to do, thus giving her time to prepare her defence, so that there might be the less likelihood of any fracas between them. Lord Killowen hated the idea of any fracas. However, at the last moment his heart smote him, a servant might pick up the letter, and Kathleen never get it; so he said to himself. In truth, he longed to know how she would look on seeing it—he could not go away without knowing; he turned and handed her the letter. The start, the crimson colour, the heaving bosom, told

him all that he had dreaded; he turned away at once, knowing now that his marriage had been a mistake.

Perhaps, he thought about all this as he drove the long six miles to the station, but there were two servants in the dog-cart behind him, and all the tenour of his life had taught Lord Killowen so to restrain any evidence of emotion, that he hardly allowed himself ever to feel, as much as he otherwise might have in the presence of spectators. In the train he busied himself with his papers: it would not do to arrive at the meeting unprepared; then he set himself to consider his future conduct towards his wife. It was clear to him now that she not only had loved, but did still love another man. It seemed to Lord Killowen a little curious that it should so happen he should be going away from the County just as that other man was coming into it.

"It is fortunate I have already promised to take her to London, if I go," thought Lord Killowen. "I will certainly find it necessary to go, and as soon as possible too. She must see him now, and after that some distraction will be the best thing for her."

Lord Killowen's well cut features were a little drawn, as he descended from the train at Dublin. He did not love his wife very passionately, but he had always hitherto been a good son and brother; he had fully intended to be a good husband—he intended it still, but it was painful to think how much *ménagement* might be required to carry out his intention.

At the Dublin station he was detained a little time, having some business to transact with the station-master, and as he came away from his interview with that official he met Sandy Beaumont, now on his way to take the train down to Faversham.

The cousins shook hands quite as cordially

as could be expected, considering their slight acquaintance with each other, having met only once before, though they had so effectually crossed each other's paths in life.

"I am sorry to be obliged to come up to Dublin, just now," said Lord Killowen; "however, it is on business, and I had arranged my plans before I heard you were coming into our parts, so you must believe that it is my misfortune, which I regret, that I shall not be able to welcome you myself at Killowen to-morrow."

"At Killowen," said Sandy with a slight air of surprise.

"Yes, Lady Faversham has kindly promised to bring you over to luncheon. Though I am prevented from seeing you, my wife would be very sorry to miss you also."

"I am afraid I have very little time, though; if Lady Faversham has promised, of course; I am sorry to think you will not be

there though," said Sandy, a little confused. He had very much shrunk from paying this visit to the Favershams, and had put off proposing it till thus late in the day, because he so disliked the idea of meeting either of his cousins. He thought Lady Faversham would have understood this dislike, and was now somewhat taken aback by her arrangement, as well as by the present unexpected meeting.

Lord Killowen saw that his cousin looked annoyed, surprised, in no wise gratified by this prospect of speedily seeing Kathleen again, unguarded by her husband.

"He does not love her," he said to himself, and he shook Sandy Beaumont's hand warmly, as he said, "I hope you may get your affairs put straight in Australia. I wish we had enough time to talk them over together, but I must not make you lose your train now."

Then Sandy Beaumont got into his train,

and Lord Killowen went on to his co-operation meeting, where his co-committee men thought him rather more diffuse and less lucid than usual, but they readily agreed, as he seemed to wish it, that somebody ought to go up to town, and that he was the right man to go; so Lord Killowen wrote to Kathleen as soon as he went to his hotel for the night, and told her she might join him there the following evening, if Lady Faversham and Sandy Beaumont left her early enough in the day; if not, she might come up by the next morning train, but in that case she must be ready to start for Holyhead at once, as he did not wish to delay about going to London.

And then Lord Killowen having sent his letter to the post, sat and meditated again. He did not once think of this co-operation society which had cost him so much trouble and thought, and for which he had that day promised to give up so much more time and

thought. But not at once—he had not promised to think of the co-operation society at once, and so he did not think of it. He sat still and thought of his wife. He had meant to be a good husband to her, but now he feared that he had failed; since he had married her, in what had he given way to her, in what had he striven to suit his life to hers? Had she not, ever since her marriage, lived his life, moulded her ways to his? It might be a wife's duty, but still even the clearest duty is not always easy to perform, and her ways had been very different ways before her marriage, and her life an altogether different life.

For the future, Lord Killowen resolved that he would be more considerate of her wishes, far kinder to her than he had yet been; he would really try to make her happy. He sighed a little as he felt that he had no power to call forth love in her, and that without doing so he could never make

Kathleen really happy; but he was practical, so he tried to waste no thoughts on this subject for regret. He would provide her with amusement—give her society. That had been an unfortunate experiment in London; but, perhaps, he had been too ready to take alarm—certainly there had been no cause for anything of the kind, further than that she was getting herself talked of, and her mother had never minded that for her. He believed she knew already that her husband did, and would be more careful for the future. He had no real fears; even her love for Sandy Beaumont would be a safeguard for her in society, and that could never lead her into any danger; for Lord Killowen thought he knew his man, and that Sandy Beaumont would be the last person in the world to endanger the honour of the woman who loved him. Besides, when he had seen him but now, Sandy had appeared

troubled, but not in the least pleased at the prospect of seeing Kathleen, and yet not so much troubled even as to be actually unwilling.

If Lady Faversham had planned it, of course he would go to Killowen to luncheon, otherwise he would not have planned it for himself. That was all. Lord Killowen felt no fear of Sandy Beaumont, no fear of anything exactly; only he determined he would henceforward be kinder to his wife. There should, if possible, be no speech between them of the letter, or of anything unpleasant; only he would strive to play his part better for the future, and as he determined this, he felt very hopeful that his wife also would play her part better for the future —that, indeed, a good time was coming for both of them. There had always been something wrong between them unacknowledged, but still existing; now he hoped that having

been, in a manner, acknowledged through the discovery of this letter of Sandy Beaumont's, it would henceforward cease to exist. He wished his wife had been more straightforward when he had questioned her about Sandy, but, of course, it had been difficult for her to do so: she must now know he knew the truth—this knowledge would be sufficient punishment for her.

And Lord Killowen sat till late on in the evening, planning little plans for Kathleen's happiness. He was fond of planning; but still there must have been some genuine nobility in the man who could bring himself to this on the evening of having made such a discovery as that which he had that day made.

A pity that these plans were fated to be fruitless!

Of the two cousins who, as life went on, had at last, as by some strange freak of

fortune, found themselves united in marriage, certainly Kathleen's was by nature the finer character. But who would not have approved Lord Killowen's way of spending the evening, rather than hers, as she sat before a photograph of Sandy Beaumont, staring at it through her tears, and then covering her face with her hands, and sobbing quick, passionate sobs; for she felt as if each moment she grew less and less worthy of his love, and though she might never possess it now, she would have liked to know herself worthy of his love.

Many of Lord Killowen's merits might be owing to that great fault of his in her eyes—his fatal coldness. But it was by no doing of his own that his blood flowed less warmly than other men's, and all his life he had striven to do his duty by those whom he knew he ought to have loved. He might not be able to love them, perhaps—that was

his misfortune; but he had been an obedient son, a careful brother, and now, this evening, he had taken a great step, for, all at once, he had grown into a sympathising husband.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PARTING.

It seemed strange to Sandy Beaumont, this return to Faversham. During the time that he had been canvassing, he had always been staying at some distance, and meeting Lord Faversham continually in other places, and Lady Faversham sometimes, he had never found any occasion to go over to see them at their own house, so that he had not been there since that spring-time when he had stayed there with Kathleen and Cosmo Beauclerc. Now the one was married, and the other dead; and Sandy himself, who had then been in a lethargy, had been awoke by a sudden pang, and felt himself now a ten years younger man, as he

came down this time, determined to woo and to win Norah Murphy for his bride. For Norah had confessed that she loved him, and the only obstacle had seemed to be that he did not love her. Sandy had thought about this obstacle a great deal since he had first been told of its existence, and he had come to the conclusion that it had no existence in reality—that it was all a myth—that he did love Norah Murphy, or why else did her soft blue eyes come back to him in the gay, noisy streets of Marseilles, and warn him off from seeing any loveliness in the dark eyes of those flower queens, who sit upon thrones in its picturesque market? why else did that low voice sound out so clear and still, as he shot strange birds upon the Nile banks, or climbed the Pyramids, or strove to see a warning in the mysterious world-honoured Sphinx? Why did he think of her in the busy streets of London? and, above

all, why did he so long for the blessing of her gentle presence, when he purposed returning to those distant Australian possessions of his?—possessions which he had never yet been able to think of but as under a curse, from that miserable man from whom they came, and as needing the presence of some angel, to purify them, and restore to them natural innocence once more. And now, when Sandy thought of the angel who would do this, why did that angel always appear to him with Norah Murphy's face?

It was clear he must be in love now with the little girl, whom he had begun by only pitying; and so, when Sandy came down to say "good-bye" to his dear friends, Lord and Lady Faversham, before starting for Australia, it was yet more with the idea of wooing and wedding Norah Murphy. She might not be willing to become his bride at once; but she must, at least, promise to

become his, as soon as he should return to claim her, and then how quickly would he not return!

Lord Faversham came to meet Sandy in the dog-cart, just as he had come the time before; but Sandy could not but notice what a change there was in Faversham as he drove up to the Cottage. It was a different season of the year now, and the Cottage was a place especially designed for spring time; all its flowers were spring flowers, all its rooms were spring rooms, that pleasant window-seat, where of old they had always clustered together for five o'clock tea, was chilly now, and the three airy drawing-rooms were almost unused, and Lady Faversham was sitting upstairs in her little boudoir to receive them when they came in. There was always something cheerful about any room in which Lady Faversham sat, hers was too naturally melancholy a character to be able

to dispense with bright surroundings, so the curtains were a warm pleasant colour, and the fire burned briskly on the hearth, and on a little ebony table in front were the loveliest of Dresden cups, surrounding a bright silver urn and teapot; still Sandy felt that Faversham Cottage was not at all the same place now it had been when last he visited it.

"Everything looks very *triste* now, does it not?" said Sybil, after she had greeted him with a glad friendly greeting, "and we must be flitting abroad again directly, but I am quite distressed to be taking you to Killowen to-morrow, for that always looks so well at this time of year, and you will think us shabbier than ever when you come back."

"Well," said Sandy, "I acknowledge I can't think why you don't live at the Castle. I am sure you would be happier there at this time of year."

"Oh, no," cried Lord Faversham, "we should shiver to death."

Then as he went away to divest himself of great-coat and comforter—for Lord Faversham was forced already to take precautions against the cold, and he had not paused to take off his wraps before ushering Sandy into his wife's warm room—Sybil explained: "You see all the Favershams have always died at the Castle, and Faversham has got a horror of it from that reason, I think. He always believes he should die, if he went to live there."

"He has a great terror of death," said Sandy, musingly. Coming back to the Cottage had already made him very dreamy.

"Yes," said Sybil, "I think it is so curious how so many very delicate people should have that. One would expect it more of strong people, like Kathleen. By the way, do you *know* I have arranged to take you over to see her to-morrow?"

"I have heard of it," said Sandy. "Is it quite an engagement?"

"Yes, Kathleen wrote directly she heard you were coming, to ask that we would go over to luncheon, and take you, and I fixed to-morrow, because it would be your first day; and I thought you might have other things you wanted to do, which might take a little arranging, so that would probably be the best opportunity. I hope you don't mind, though."

"Oh no, not at all." Then after a pause, "Have you been seeing much of the Murphys lately?"

"One is always meeting Sophy and the General about everywhere. Norah never goes anywhere; but she spent a few weeks with us in the course of the summer."

"Did she?" said Sandy, his face lighting up with interest.

"Yes, and I like her much better than

I did," said Sybil, with a smile, in answer to his clearly enough expressed, though not yet spoken question. "There is, as you said, a great deal in her, more than one would have any idea of at first."

"I am glad you like her. Do you—did she tell you, I had asked her to be my wife?"

"No, she is not the kind of girl who would be likely to tell any one that, unless she had accepted you; but why did not she? I have so often thought ——"

"What?" asked Sandy; but Lady Faversham would not go on with her speech, she only asked again,

"Why did not she accept you?"

"I did not love her as she deserved to be loved, and she knew it, and told me so, though not in those words exactly."

"No, that would not be like her. Poor little Norah!" and Lady Faversham sat

and thought for a few moments, then she said, "But you have come to ask her to be your wife again now, have not you? And you will not be satisfied with that answer a second time, I should think."

"No, for it would not be true," replied Sandy, "except in as far as no man can ever love a really good and loving woman as much as she deserves."

"That is a very pretty speech, Mr. Beaumont," said Lady Faversham, playfully. "I do not wonder any longer that all women like you so much, if that is the way you think of them."

"Do women like me?" asked Sandy, looking up. "I am sure, if they do, they are more reticent about that than about other things, for I never had the least idea of it."

But Lady Faversham only laughed in

answer to this, and declared now he was asking for compliments, so she would not give him any. It all seemed so long ago that time when she had herself cared for Sandy Beaumont, and she was such a happy wife and mother now, she could not help feeling glad to think Sandy was also going to taste some such happiness as her own. By this time she had learnt to think Norah Murphy quite worthy to bestow it upon him, for the little girl loved him so truly. Lady Faversham never could help liking any one who really loved, and Norah Murphy must have loved very really, very unselfishly, since she had forced herself to refuse Sandy Beaumont, her own life being bound up in his as it was. Lady Faversham's opinion of her rose immensely, and she felt glad she was to be Sandy's wife in the end, she could not help making little jokes, and showing her gladness.

But next day it seemed to her somewhat strange that she should have been so glad about this, as she started for the drive over to Killowen with Sandy to lunch with Kathleen. She feared she had been cruel to her girlhood's friend in her gladness, and yet would it not be the best thing for Kathleen; would not Sandy's marriage do more than anything else could towards forcing her to be contented in her present life? Lady Faversham could not be certain.

Killowen looked very beautiful as they drove up to it; the castle, with its tower and quaint old Elizabethan windows, was lighted up by the yellow autumn sun, and its grey stone shone forth bright and almost weird-like in the midst of the otherwise gloomy landscape. It was planted on a hill, but on one side of it there was a level piece of garden, and this was laid out as an Italian garden, and being so late in the year, it was grand

with dahlias and asters, and two large late flowering agaparthi, which stood beckoning to the stranger at its entrance, but Sandy and Lady Faversham only caught a glimpse of this as they drove up, and leaving their carriage, entered a hall sweet with an orange-tree in full flower, and lovely with white camellias. Then they went upstairs, and were welcomed by Kathleen clad in a black velvet dress with no trimming but the Spanish buttons of massive silver down the front of it. Her hair was bound back by a bright rose-coloured ribbon, and as she raised her dress in walking, she revealed a satin petticoat underneath it of the same colour. Sybil thought she had never seen her look more beautiful or more unconscious of her beauty. Indeed, all that day she could not enough admire Kathleen in every way; her behaviour was something wonderful to Lady Faversham, who knew the secret of her love

for this cousin, whom she now seemed to overwhelm with her queenly condescension. If she had known that Sandy knew it also, she would have wondered yet more. But Kathleen knew it, and yet she did not seem troubled by the knowledge; she had hardly welcomed Lady Faversham before she was pouring out to Sandy her lord's regrets at his enforced absence.

"I am so sorry too," she continued, in her deep rich tones. "I have always so wished you two to be better acquainted. I am sure you would like each other so much, and there seems to be a sort of fate against it."

"Yes," said Sandy, "we have certainly met very rarely, considering that we are cousins; but I came upon him at the station yesterday in Dublin, and he told me himself how he was obliged to be away. Some charity business, is it not?"

Then Kathleen proceeded to unfold Lord

Killowen's views about co-operation, dwelling much upon their being entirely his own, and saying how they had been much opposed at first, but now every one had come round, and he was to inaugurate a new order of things in Ireland, and do an immensity of good to all classes of people, was indeed already doing an immensity of good.

"He is certainly wonderfully energetic," said Lady Faversham, while Sandy did not answer much. He seemed occupied in looking about him; he had known Killowen so well at one time, it was no wonder he liked to take note of the alterations in it now. Lady Faversham observing how he was engaged, wanted Kathleen to show him the winter garden of her own contriving, but Kathleen did not seem to care about exhibiting this.

"There is so little time," she said, "and I want him to see my lord's model farm directly after luncheon. We must really go

to luncheon now though, or there will be no time for anything."

But first Kathleen took Sybil upstairs to smooth her hair after her long drive, and when they came down to the large drawing-room again, they found Sandy standing before Kathleen's picture.

"That picture has been the cause of all the misery of my life," said Kathleen, and she advanced and stood before the picture also, and looked at it with tearful eyes and glowing cheeks.

"How so?" asked Sandy, and he turned from the picture, and looked at Kathleen herself.

Her long black velvet dress was trailing far behind her, but she had looped it up in front now, so as to display a rim of rose-coloured satin in permanence; her hands were resting lightly on the high back of an old carved ebony chair, her head was thrown

back, her eyes dilated, and the soft white throat seemed quivering with suppressed emotion. For the first time Lady Faversham felt frightened at what she had done in bringing these two together; she advanced and also stood before the picture.

"It is such a lovely picture," she said softly, and glanced up at the smiling girlish face, running over with happiness, unclouded by any shade of sorrow.

But Sandy never moved his eyes from Kathleen, as he replied, "Yes, it is a pretty picture enough, but it was never really like Kathleen."

"You mean it idealised me, I suppose," said Kathleen, glancing at him a quick angry glance; "but I was better looking once than I am now," and she glanced back at the picture, as if she would have stabbed it with her eyes, if only her eyes could but have power to stab.

"It might be idealising the queen of the flowers to paint her as a brier rosebud, but for me I could never consider the likeness satisfactory," said Sandy, shortly, and he walked away, and looked at a picture of his aunt, taken soon after she had first come to Killowen as a bride, taken in a grey satin dress, with a violet ribbon round her throat, and such soft dewy violet eyes, as it was difficult to believe the Dowager Lady Killowen had ever really possessed.

"Oh, if you are going to talk poetry, we may as well go to luncheon," said Kathleen, speaking almost as shortly as Sandy; and then she led Lady Faversham into the dark carved oak dining-room, and after a moment or two Sandy followed them.

During luncheon time, Kathleen never once referred to the old days, when Sandy had been almost as much at home at Killowen as she herself had been; excepting that

she talked of the alterations, meaning always the alterations since that time; she did not seem to recollect that he had ever been there before. Nor did Sandy refer to that old time; but Lady Faversham saw he was thinking of it, as every now and then he looked at Kathleen with those quiet, earnest eyes of his, and all the time Kathleen went on talking in her clear musical tones about how "my lord had done this, and that was a fancy of my lord's;" and how she was going to join him to-morrow to go up to London.

Lady Faversham noticed that, though she talked a great deal that day, Kathleen never once laughed: there was something very grave about her, as if she were repeating a lesson she had learnt by rote; and once, in the middle of a sentence about "my lord's" almshouses, she interrupted herself, and broke off, and said something about an hospital of

which he was one of the patrons; and then went on about the almshouses as if she could not say her lesson rightly unless she said it quite straight, and the bit about the hospital had been left out by mistake.

Directly after luncheon, she drove them over to the model farm, and of this she did the honours most laboriously; but Lady Faversham observed again that, though Kathleen insisted upon Sandy's seeing each special contrivance of Lord Killowen's, she seemed never to care to wait to hear his opinion of anything, but went on just the same whether he spoke or not. On the way back she stopped at the stable to show off a new horse.

"Lord Killowen has just bought it for me," she said, "but I have not tried it yet. It only arrived the day before my lord left, and I should not care to ride without him. When we come back from London, I look forward to many

pleasant rides; but I do not care for anything of the kind alone."

Sandy was very silent; he hardly looked at Kathleen now, and all that old lost expression, which he had worn so habitually when he first came back from Australia, seemed to have returned to him now. He walked about with his hands behind his back and his head bent down, and seemed hardly to know what he was doing: the two ladies had to make all the conversation; but, indeed, Kathleen seemed to require very little aid. Once she sighed, such a very tired sigh, that involuntarily Lady Faversham glanced at Sandy Beaumont, and she saw him look up at Kathleen, but so slowly that before his eyes had reached her face she had gone off again upon some other subject, still quite grave, but perfectly calm and composed. It was all like a dream to Lady Faversham, and yet she felt the whole time as if her two companions

were asleep, and she the only one of them awake. As to Sandy, he looked at everything he was shown, but he did not appear to see anything only when they returned to the Castle again, and Kathleen took them into her boudoir to have some coffee before returning home again; only then did Sandy seem to awake. He glanced round the room with a quick inquiring glance, as if he must see everything in it at once, as if he knew there was something wrong, and expected now to see what it was, and would rather know it at once. He straightway picked out the writing-table as an object into which to investigate, and walked up to it at once, as if he knew by intuition that it was there that Kathleen usually sat. He sat down in her accustomed chair, and glanced round as if to see what were the objects which she chose most habitually to meet her eye. Outside there were the tops of some distant wood;

a clematis and virginia creeper, each thrust some leaves in at the window. On the table were the usual writing-table ornaments—a set of gold writing materials studded with turquoise, a coral handle-shaped knife, a silver owl with ruby eyes for matches, a coral claw for a letter weight, a gold frame with coloured photographs of her mother and husband on each side. Nothing could be more proper, nothing more meaningless to Sandy Beaumont; he glanced up at the water-colours on the walls, they were mostly very pretty and new, evidently "my lord's" gifts; but among them were all Kathleen's old school-girl favourites. Sandy recognized them, and saw she had not discarded one of the old friends that had been wont to adorn her school-room walls; then he got up and went to the little round table, at which Kathleen now sat, and received his cup of coffee.

"You seem very restless, Sandy," said Kathleen, looking up at him.

"I'm afraid we ought to be going," he then said. "You see I feel responsible for Lady Faversham to-day, and the evening will, I am afraid, be chilly."

"Well, this coffee will warm you, and you cannot go till the carriage has come round; it will be ready soon enough now," and Kathleen sighed. But she seemed to recollect herself at the sound of this sigh, and immediately got up and gave Sandy her photograph-book. "There is something to amuse you meanwhile," she said.

Sandy took it, and turned over the pages quickly, impatiently. There were photographs of himself in all the early pages, photographs in groups, and photographs of himself alone, vignettes, cartes, medallions—there was hardly a page without him at the beginning of the book; but in the latter pages there

was no photograph of him, only in the last page of the book were there two photographs of Lord Killowen, back to back, one by Silvy, one by an Italian artiste, both with exactly the same expression, both very well dressed, both in the same labouredly easy attitude. Sandy shut up the book after he had looked at these two photographs.

"Really it is time for us to go," he said. "I'm sure the carriage has come round, Lady Faversham, and you have finished your coffee."

"You have not drank your own, though."

Sandy took it up, and drank it off quickly. "Now I have," he said. He was more impatient to be gone than Lady Faversham had ever seen him.

Kathleen did not make any further effort to detain them, only she went down to the door with them, to see that Sybil was

properly wrapped up, as she said. Lady Faversham was not very amply provided with wraps, and nothing would satisfy Kathleen but she must fetch one of her own heavy cloaks, and almost smother the fragile Sybil in it. "Good-bye, my own dearest," she said, as she threw it round her, and kissed her.

"Good-bye, Kathleen," said Sandy, as he held her hand in his for a moment; their eyes met.

Kathleen wrenched her hand away. "It is cold—cold," she said, and ran into the house, not pausing to look at either of them again, till she was within the inner glass doors.

"Somehow, I don't know why," said Lady Faversham, "I always feel quite choky whenever I say good-bye to Kathleen;" but Sandy was looking out of the carriage-window; he was expecting to see somsthing,

and he was not disappointed: in a minute he saw a face at the window of Kathleen's boudoir, and Kathleen herself looked out. Her face looked very pale against the rich red virginia creeper, her hair blown back by the wind seemed to throw a golden halo round her; with one hand she was holding back a withered branch of clematis so as not to obstruct her view; but she stood so still, so motionless, she almost looked like the ghost of herself come back to earth for a moment, pale and weird-like. Sandy waved his arm to her in farewell, but Kathleen gave no answering wave: she stood quite still, looking after them, and the carriage rolled away. Perhaps Sandy felt choky also, for he made no answer to Lady Faversham's last remark.

CHAPTER X.

SAD PRESENTIMENTS.

"I AM glad I did not go with you to-day," said Lord Faversham, as he and Sandy Beaumont joined Lady Faversham in her warm little boudoir, after dinner. "Both you and Beaumont seem thoroughly exhausted, for you have not a word to say for yourselves."

"I am not tired exactly," said Sybil.

"What, then?" said Lord Faversham, establishing himself in his favourite arm-chair. "I had hoped you would bring back no end of news from Killowen, and I had looked forward to Beaumont, at least, pronouncing all the changes great mistakes, for people generally dislike alterations in any

place they have once been attached to; and I don't at all approve of some of Killowen's improvements, as he calls them."

"I dare say," said Sandy, "but I did not notice any such great alterations, at least, not in the parts I used to care about. That farm, of course, is an evident improvement, and so is the new curve in the drive up to the house."

"Yes; but did not you feel a little the loss of that old willow on the road to the farm? I never saw a finer willow of the weeping kind anywhere, and I was sorry myself, when I heard that was gone."

"Is that gone?" exclaimed Sandy; "I never noticed it. Oh, I am sorry."

"Well, I should have thought you would be; but how came you not to notice it? You must have passed where it used to stand, at least twice, in going and returning from the farm."

"Yes, I suppose we did," said Sandy, slowly. "I don't know how I came not to miss it. That was one of my favourite trees. What was it cut down for?"

"It was not cut down. Killowen has better taste than that, though he does not care half enough about his trees, I always think; but in draining the meadow above, they seem to have meddled with the roots, and then they never appear to have considered that they were cutting off its water supply from the old tree, till in the summer heat it began to droop and die, and then it was too late to do anything."

"Do you think Killowen cares for—his wife?" asked Sandy, without seeming to have paid much attention to Lord Faversham's account of the willow.

"I really don't know," said Lord Faversham. "I always take for granted that my neighbours love their wives till I find they

do not, and then I am very sorry, but take it equally for granted. To my mind it would be rather an impertinent curiosity that would seek to inquire into whether they did or not."

"I am afraid, then, that I am guilty of this impertinent curiosity," said Sandy Beaumont; "but you see they are both my cousins, and Kathleen was at one time more like a sister to me than anything else," he added, with an effort.

"Yes, of course you are naturally very much interested in them? I did not mean my remark to apply to you so much as to myself," said Lord Faversham, apologetically. "But to say the truth, he certainly does not *seem* to care for her so much as she seems to care for him."

"Does he think she cares for him, do you fancy?" asked Sandy Beaumont again, still standing leaning against the mantelpiece,

and half turned away from the rest of the room, staring into the glowing coals.

"Will not a man always be deceived, if a wife condescends to feign?" asked Lord Faversham, quietly.

"My dear Faversham, what a preposterous idea?" exclaimed Sybil; "do you think men are all women's dupes."

"No, for I think women very seldom take sufficient trouble, or persevere long enough. They always break down in their little plans of deceit sooner or later. But I don't know why we are talking in this way. Let us hope nothing of the kind is required at Killowen."

"Amen," said Sandy, and sat down, and proceeded to talk to Lord Faversham about his Australian possessions, and how it happened that he had such bad accounts from them now.

Next day Sandy went over Faversham

model farm, and in the afternoon he mooned about doing nothing in particular, but evidently exceedingly unwilling to ride over to the Murphys' with Lord Faversham, as Sybil at luncheon proposed their both doing. Sybil could not understand this unwillingness, but Sandy understood it perfectly, and knew that it arose from his great reluctance to give up all hopes of one day having Norah Murphy for his wife. He knew he had no right to ask her to be his wife now, he knew he did not even dare to do so, with the recollection of how bravely the little girl had avowed her love for him, and yet refused his previous offer of marriage. He knew he dared not repeat this offer now, for though he had crossed over to Ireland, and gone down to Faversham, happy in the belief that he loved Norah Murphy, that one day at Killowen Castle had effectually undeceived him. Sandy felt very down-hearted about

it all, he did not wish for Kathleen for his wife; he believed indeed that married to her his life would be a far less happy life than it might be were he to marry Norah Murphy, and he did wish to have Norah Murphy for his wife, yet he felt he must not ask her, for he loved Kathleen best. Best! that did not express what he felt towards her at all. As he walked through the grand old castle rooms, with Kathleen's gleaming hair, and stately undulating figure, moving on in front, he felt that she was the one woman he had ever loved. He had loved her when she was a girl, he loved her now that she was a woman, and his love for her could only cease with his life. Whilst he was away from her, he might be able to see the charms that other women possessed, he might be forced to acknowledge that they had merits to which Kathleen herself could lay no claim, but when he found himself within the influ-

ence of her queenly bearing, her rich clear voice, her expressive countenance, especially when he thus found himself amongst all his old boyish haunts, it was no question with him any longer as to whether in this or that she was more or less charming than other women. She at once became all in all to him, and no other woman could hope to retain the least fraction of his heart.

"Oh, that I had not been a fool, when I was last at Faversham!" Sandy groaned to himself. Not that he thought he had lost such great or certain happiness for himself, but that he loved Kathleen. He understood her, he had known her all her life, in a thousand varying moods, and he knew, or thought he knew, what daily, hourly misery she must be undergoing now. "And it is doing her no good," thought Sandy, bitterly; "she is only growing prouder and falser every day upon it. Good Lord, it almost seems to be

her duty to be false now. Why was I such a fool, when I was last here? Why was I such a brute?"

Lord and Lady Faversham did not know what to make of him, he seemed so grave and abstracted as he wandered about the garden, with his hands behind his back, and his eyes apparently lost among the windings of his own beard.

"I am afraid I did very wrong to take him to Killowen," said Sybil to her husband, "but Kathleen seemed to wish it, and Lord Killowen, and he made no objection; and I thought it might be best that the cousins should meet again, especially as he is so soon going far away again."

"Used he to be fond of her himself?" asked Lord Faversham.

"Oh, yes, he has always cared for her—always—all his life long, I believe, though

somehow he would not believe it himself when he was last here."

"What, did he care for her when I was so much in love with her myself at Ryde? No, really, what a close fellow he must be. He tried to comfort me then, but I had no idea he was in love with her himself."

"Yes—always—always," sighed Lady Faversham, "and I did so hope he was going to be happy in the end, and marry Norah Murphy. Norah would make him such a good little wife, and now she will break her heart for him instead. For he will never marry her now, he is just as much in love with Kathleen as ever, I believe. But do take him over to the Murphys' to-morrow, Faversham, and see what you can do."

So next day, Lord Faversham and Mr. Beaumont rode over to the Murphys', and were shown into the old general, sitting in his study.

"How d'ye do! how d'ye do. Lady Faversham not come too; that is a pity. I must send for the girls though, to see you. We don't have so many beaux in these parts that they'd ever forgive me if I let one go away without their seeing him. Although Miss Sophy has fixed on her own particular one at last. Tell the young ladies, Jenkins."

But though the young ladies were thus sent for, only Sophy appeared, and when she was asked for Norah, she could give no satisfactory reason for her non-appearance.

"She was practising duets with me a moment before, but she said she was busy. I am sure I don't know what she was busy with. No, now don't send for her, papa; you know Norah can't bear being sent for, when she says she is busy, and she is a good little thing, so she shan't be teased."

Thus spoke Sophy Murphy, and then she proceeded with great *sang froid* to receive Lord

Faversham's congratulations on the announcement of her engagement — about making which he seemed a great deal more shy, than she about receiving them.

Sandy thought he was to go away without seeing Norah Murphy, and when he thought this, he felt almost sorry, for he would have liked once more to look into the sweet, pale-blue eyes, and listen to the soft gentle tones; but then he persuaded himself it was best as it was, and that since she could never now be his wife, it would be best for him not to see her again, before he went out to Australia; and had to set to work to make what he could of his lonely life there. But as it happened, he did see Norah first, for the old general was bent on showing Lord Faversham a design for some additions to the parish church, which had been sent for his approbation, and nobody seemed to know where it was but Norah, so she was sent for, and appeared

with the design in her hand, and shook hands with Sandy quite quietly and naturally, as if he was any everyday visitor, and then proceeded to unfold the design, and explain it to Lord Faversham. Sandy could not but think she looked very sweet and pretty as she did so, standing there in her simple grey tight-fitting dress. He envied the man who might one day make her his wife; but he knew she was not for him, and so he turned away with a sigh, and devoted himself to the coquettish Sophy, who, though she was just engaged, was none the less eager to receive any attentions she might be able to divert to herself.

"Well, did you find the Murphys at home?" asked Lady Faversham, when they returned. "I am afraid you can't have had a very pleasant ride."

"Why not?" asked Lord Faversham; he seemed to be put out about something, and impatient.

"I don't know; there is such a horrid feeling in the air. It must be thunder coming on, I fancy."

"There is no thunder about," said Lord Faversham, sharply.

"It certainly does not look like it," said Sandy, "but I feel just as Lady Faversham says. I think there must be a thunder-storm somewhere, even if it is not coming here."

"Oh, there is no thunder," said Lord Faversham, almost rudely; and banged the door, as he left the room.

"Faversham feels it too, though he will not own it," said Sybil, rising to close the door. "He is always so susceptible of anything of the kind. Really, it is quite a comfort to me to see you both at home, I had such a feeling of something dreadful happening. I know it must be thunder now. Well, did you see all the Murphy's? you have not told me yet."

"Yes, we saw them all," said Sandy, slowly.

"Norah too?" asked Lady Faversham, almost afraid of asking.

"Yes, Norah too, but I have changed my mind since I was talking to you the other night, Lady Faversham," and Sandy passed his hand over his face so as to shade his eyes from observation.

"I am so afraid I did wrong," began poor Lady Faversham. Sandy smiled, and interrupted her.

"What! in taking me to Killowen, yesterday. No, I can never thank you enough for that. I would not have given up that last sight of Kathleen for—for all the world. I feel it is the last time I shall ever see her."

"Oh, Mr. Beaumont, don't say that, please."

The tears were in Lady Faversham's eyes,

and the tears were in Sandy Beaumont's also, as he said,

"I am going out to Australia to remain this time. There is no reason I should ever come home again, but even if there were, Kathleen won't last long at this life she is now leading. It is contrary to her very nature, but she means to die at her post I see now, and it is for having let me see that, that I am so thankful to you, Lady Faversham;" and then he wrung her hand, and without another word got up and left the room.

Lord Faversham continued to seem put out the next day, every one else appeared as usual, but he still continued put out; he said quite crossly at breakfast, that he hoped every one saw now that there had been no thunder, and then a few moments after, he himself hazarded the idea that there was a storm coming on.

"My dear Faversham, look what a bright

beautiful day it is. Quite a wonderful day for autumn."

"That is just it," said Lord Faversham, testily; "those wonderful days always mean bad weather at this time of year," and directly after breakfast he took his hat, and disappeared by himself, without saying where he was going, or asking any one to accompany him.

He did not appear again till about luncheon time, and then he found Sandy and Sybil sitting together in the latter's boudoir, and the two children both established on the sofa beside Sandy, and being very much delighted at having boats cut out of pieces of stick for them. Lord Faversham was always kind to his children, and so he kissed them, and spoke very gently to them now, but still he told them to run away, or else they would not be ready for their dinner, and when the children had left the room, it appeared he

was yet as much out of sorts as ever. He took up the County paper that had just arrived, and turned over its leaves, pettishly finding fault with it for containing no news.

"It is always said to show a happy age when no history can be written of it," said Lady Faversham, soothingly; "let us hope the want of news speaks well for the prosperity of Ireland."

"In that case one had better take in no papers," said Lord Faversham. "Pshaw, there is nothing in it. When did you say Killowen was going to start for England?"

"He was going across by the mid-day boat, so as to go on to London by the next morning's express, after sleeping at Holyhead," said Sybil.

"Are you sure? I dare say he would not start till to-day."

Sybil looked at him appealingly; she

had never known her husband so difficult to please before. Could she alter Lord Killowen's plans? Was she answerable for them?

Sandy saw her expression of rather helpless annoyance, and hastened to corroborate what she had already said. "It is not at all likely. Kathleen said he wrote as if in a hurry to get up to town, and proposing to her to leave Killowen the evening of the day we were there, if she did not feel equal to so long a journey at once. She said she preferred having fewer breaks, and going that day was inconvenient to her; so she was going to join him next morning, and expected to start for Holyhead at once, and leave by the next morning's train. Of course, Killowen might alter his plans afterwards, but those were his intentions."

"Then, of course, he has carried them out," said Lord Faversham, pettishly.

"Killowen's intentions are like the laws of the Medes and Persians. Well, really, what is the use of publishing a paper like this? 'Lady and the Misses Plummer clad in mourning for the loss of their cousin, Admiral Heartingpoff.' Interesting piece of intelligence; admirably worded, too! Sybil, did you observe that they were clad in mourning when you saw them the other day? Admiral Heartingpoff has been dead at least a fortnight."

"I did not notice," said Sybil, "I don't think they were; but, anyhow, we know it now, thanks to your despised paper; so we may take it for granted, and save ourselves the trouble of looking when we next meet them."

"It seems you have saved yourself that trouble already."

Then there was a silence, only broken by Lord Faversham's "pishes" and "pshaws,"

as he rustled the pages of this unlucky paper, while Sandy wondered at his friend, whom he had never before seen so irritable, and speculated a little as to whether it did not spoil a man to have such a very complaisant wife as Lady Faversham, and whether he might not himself have rapidly grown into a domestic tyrant, if he had been able to marry Norah Murphy.

Lady Faversham had meanwhile been trying to think of some more agreeable topic of conversation, although much impeded in her efforts by her fear that her husband must be ill to be so cross. "People are always said to be so irritable just before breaking a blood-vessel," she thought anxiously to herself. "Oh, I do hope nothing dreadful is going to happen." Just as she had reached this point in her thoughts, she was startled by a sudden cry of "Good God!" from Lord Faversham. He was sitting with his back to her, and she

could not see what had happened, but she thought at once that her fears were realized, and, springing up, bent over him, collected, prepared for whatever might happen, but with an icy look of terror on her face, that frightened Sandy far more than Lord Faversham's exclamation.

"What is it?" he cried, and he advanced also and looked over Lord Faversham, who was blankly pointing at an announcement in the paper. It was a telegram: "The morning express that left Holyhead on Thursday for London ran into a down goods train. Fire broke out, and only three passengers and a guard escaped unhurt."

"Killowen may not have gone by it," said Lord Faversham, recovering first from his sudden alarm.

"They do not say the others are killed; they may only be maimed," said Lady Faversham, in that hushed tone in which people

speak of something they think almost too awful to allude to openly. "Telegrams are so often false, too," she added, more cheerfully.

"I am afraid this telegram must be true," said Lord Faversham, slowly. "You see the date; there has been plenty of time to contradict it; but Lady Killowen, very likely, was too tired to go on at once. I have no doubt—"

"She went by it," said Sandy Beaumont. He was standing behind Lord Faversham's chair, still looking down upon the paper. His voice sounded like a distant knell, it was so deep, so solemn, it startled Sybil and her husband. They both turned round and looked at him.

Lord Faversham said, "How do you know it?"

Sandy lightly touched the paper with his hand. "By that telegram," he said, "I know she went."

"You can't know by that," said Lord Faversham, rising now at once, and laying his own small, delicate hand caressingly on the other's broad shoulder. "My dear fellow, you can't know it, it is most unlikely, it—— Come down with me to the station, and let us telegraph to the hotel at Dublin where Killowen was staying, and hear when he left it."

"He may not have gone. I know Kathleen went."

"She would not go without him. Let us send an express to Killowen. She may never have left home; sudden illness may have stopped her—such things have happened before now. Let us telegraph to Holyhead; let us do something." And the colour burnt Lord Faversham's fair cheek, while his eyes filled with tears, and his hand trembled with excitement.

"It is no use," said Sandy, "it can make no difference."

"Yes, we should know—we should hear."

"I do know; I have heard enough already."

Then Sybil took Sandy's hand, and kissed it through her tears, she herself hardly understood why, nor did she know she had done so till afterwards. Neither did Sandy himself seem fully conscious of it; but he looked at her and saw that she was pale and terrified, and he walked across the room, and fetched her a glass of water, and, handing it to her, forced her to sit down and drink it. Sybil needed it indeed; the shock she had received had been a terrible one to her, and she had been already alarmed for her husband. She burst into tears now. Lord Faversham bent over her, and kissed her. "My darling, my own darling," he said.

The next moment they both recollected

Sandy Beaumont, and regretted that they might have given him additional pain by their momentary forgetfulness. But it did not appear to be so. He smiled a weary, sorrowful smile, as Sybil looked up at him through her tears; but all he said was:

"It must be a great comfort to women to faint."

Again Lord Faversham seized his arm. "Come with me—come with me, Beaumont," he said; "we can do nothing but telegraph now. Let us do that at least."

"Go with him," said Sybil, faintly; then she whispered still lower to Sandy Beaumont. "It will be so much better for him to be doing something."

Indeed she felt it would be better for both the men to try to do something, but as soon as they left her she began to wish she had gone with them also, it was so terrible to sit still in her pretty boudoir, and think.

"Kathleen! Kathleen! My dear beautiful darling Kathleen! Oh, it cannot be! It cannot—cannot be!" she cried, and covered her face with her hands, and wept aloud. She had no thought for the other passengers by that train—not even for Lord Killowen as yet; she could think of no one but her beautiful friend, the one friend of her girlish days, and she felt—she knew, that Kathleen was dead. But it must not be said as yet, no one must dare to put the idea into words. Of course she had not started, of course some accident, as she would probably have considered it at the time, must have delayed her either at home or on the road. It was impossible that she could have been in any way concerned in this terrible accident. That was only a piece of news for the County paper; it was impossible that any one whom one knew and loved should be affected by it. So Lady Faversham told herself, but she sobbed all the

same, and then she picked up the paper, and read that short telegram over and over again.

Meanwhile Sandy had not gone far with Lord Faversham. Hardly had they left the house, when he withdrew his arm from his friend's. "Faversham, you are my very dear friend," he said; "but do not take it unkindly of me, if I say I had rather be alone at present. Kathleen—and I——" His voice faltered for a moment; then he went on firmly, "I know what that paper says is true, and I know she went by that train, but I cannot go to the station and hear that she did so, as if —as if——Do you go on and telegraph if you care to do so. For me I know enough already, and I had rather be alone."

And then abruptly Sandy left Lord Faversham, and wandered away among the trees and grass. After that the boy Earl had no heart to go on to the station alone, but he dispatched a servant with a variety of tele-

grams, and himself went back to Lady Faversham, to wait for the answers with her.

He found her sitting with her children, kissing them, and telling them stories with a pale tearful face, but she rose up at once on seeing her husband, and going to him, laid her hand upon his shoulder. "Dear Faversham," she said. Then Lord Faversham turned very white for a moment, but after that his colour returned higher than usual, and he would not hear a word in favour of Lord and Lady Killowen's having gone by the train they had intended.

"Wait and you will see," he said. So they waited till the servant returned with telegrams in answer. He had not waited for answers to all those Lord Faversham had sent, for the boy Earl had been lavish in his questions, and the two answers that came first were sufficient: "Lord and Lady Killowen slept at Holyhead, and left by the morn-

ing train." "Sole survivors from yesterday's accident, John Smith, a guard; James Sivell and Peter Lawley, blue jackets; Ellen Smith, much injured." Then Lord Faversham broke down. "I can't go and tell Beaumont this," he said, and trembled all over.

"Dearest, he knows it already," said Sybil, "but I will go and tell him if you wish it;" and then Lord Faversham could not rest till she put on her hat and shawl, and went out to look for Sandy Beaumont. She found him stretched out upon the grass under an old elm-tree, lying with his face buried in his hands, and he lay there so still, without moving even when she came near him, that Sybil was almost afraid of disturbing him, but she thought it best to make him certain at once, if perchance there had been any doubt in his mind before, so she sat down on the grass beside him, and said, "Mr. Beaumont, Faversham could not bear to bring

you these telegrams, but he wished you to see them, so I have brought them to you. They are only what you expected, I think."

Sandy started violently at the sound of her voice, and he uncovered his face and looked up. He must have been pressing his hands very hard against his face, for there were traces of the finger marks on it at first, then as they disappeared, he looked very pale. He took the telegrams, but for a moment or two appeared unable to look at them, trifling with them with his fingers; at last he seemed to gather up courage, and read them slowly through, after that he glanced up with tearful eyes, but with one of the old sunny smiles which had been so habitual to him at one time, though Lady Faversham had not seen him smile like that for years. "Thank you," he said.

He half rose from his lying posture, but still remained sitting; somehow Sybil thought

he was afraid to trust himself upon his feet as yet. "I hope this will not make Faversham ill," he said; "evidently he knew better than any of us what was happening, while we were trying to be cheerful. I hope it won't do him harm."

"I hope not," said Sybil, vaguely; she hardly knew what she was saying, but she thought it better to speak to him, to distract him if possible from his own grief. "Poor Lady Killowen," she said; "who will tell her, I wonder."

"I shall, of course," replied Sandy, at once looking up half surprised.

"You!"

"It is my place. Who else should?" he asked, quietly.

"Oh, no one; but how will you? She is sure to hear of it first."

"Leaving this by the next train I shall catch the night boat, and then go on to Lea-

mington at once. I do not think she will have heard of it first, I would go quicker if I could."

"Shall you be able to pass along *that* line?" asked Sybil, lower.

"I must," said Sandy, but he spoke lower also, and he turned his face away for a moment.

He seemed so quiet and composed, that there was nothing more to be said, but as he got up now, and walked slowly with her to the house, Sybil felt as if she would almost have wished to see him more shaken. To her he appeared terribly calm.

Only as they reached the house, and Lady Faversham in her confusion led the way into the drawing-room, which had been unused of late, only then did Sandy break down. He stood still for a moment on entering it; then all around so unchanged since he had last stayed at Faversham, rather

more than a year before, seemed to recall Kathleen too forcibly even for his composure. He recollected how she had walked across the room and kissed him, calling him "Dearest Sandy! Dear old boy!" as she had always been wont to call him long ago, when they had been boy and girl together. He recollected how she had sat at the piano and sang:

"How could I tell I should love thee to-day,
Whom that day I held not dear?
How could I tell I should love thee away,
When I did not love thee anear?"

And Sandy could bear up no longer, but sobbed aloud, and Lady Faversham felt that she could do nothing for him now, and that he would indeed rather be alone. So she stole away, and softly closed the door behind her, leaving him with the long buried, but now so terribly awakened memories of Kathleen—his Kathleen. Yes, he called her so now, when she was dead, and her husband

was dead, and there was no one to forbid him any longer.

Lady Faversham went upstairs and gave orders that Mr. Beaumont's servant should pack up his master's things, and that luncheon should not be removed from the dining-room, because Mr. Beaumont must eat something before he went, and then she herself carried up a glass of wine to her husband, and forced him to drink it. Lord Faversham seemed really to require something of the kind, for he looked quite worn out and exhausted, but his first words were about Sandy Beaumont.

Then Lady Faversham said where she had left him. "I did not think what I was doing," she said, "but I am glad I went there, since it seems to recall her to him in this way. It is better that he should not bear up too long—that his sorrow should have a vent."

"Yes, it is better," said Lord Faversham.

CHAPTER XI.

ALL OVER.

"No, sir, there is no distinguishing the bodies. Indeed, sir, no bodies have been found. The fire burnt everything." Thus spoke a pale railway official, evidently still shaken by the recent horror of which he might be said to have been a witness, as much as any one could be a witness of such a terrible catastrophe as this, that had just taken place. He had been by at the time, he had seen the flames, they had been a grand, indeed, a beautiful sight; but he had not looked at them in this way, and he hardly remembered them now. Already agonized relations were arriving asking for their

dead; and he had seen their faces; he could not forget their faces. After these faces he had seen, it was a relief to him to look upon Sandy Beaumont's pale but unmoved countenance. Why, this gentleman's face was hardly so white as his own, and his voice was so hard and firm, there was almost a metallic ring in it, as he now asked :—

"Has nothing been found? Absolutely nothing?"

"A few things, sir. If you will step this way," and Sandy followed the guard, and was led into a rough shed.

There was no order anywhere yet, no one even set in authority. Every one had been, as it were, paralyzed by this awful accident, the most comprehensive of any that had yet taken place in the sad record of railway casualties. A few things had been found when the flames had been extinguished, very few; these had been placed

in a rough shed, and there the guard now led Sandy Beaumont. Nobody was in charge, nothing was arranged; there was very little to arrange, alas! for how many would have valued mementoes of those dead!

The guard made little objection, when Sandy Beaumont at once singled out an ornament from the few lying there. "It belonged to my cousin," he said. "I am just going to her mother," and he slipped a sovereign into the guard's hand. "Here is my card and address if you think there is likely to be any trouble about it."

It was not for the guard to remonstrate after this, he was not in charge, so he pocketed the sovereign and the card, and Sandy Beaumont went on his way once more; but he did not dare to look at what he had taken till he found himself alone again, shut up in a railway carriage, and

hurrying through the darkness. Then, by the light of the flickering lamp, he looked at the bracelet, Kathleen's bracelet, the one she had always worn, the bracelet that contained his portrait, and his tears fell fast upon it.

After that he knew nothing more of his journey; he recollected nothing more till he arrived at Leamington. Sometimes it seemed to him that he had got there in a moment of time, sometimes that he had been travelling for years; at last he found himself at Leamington, and drove up to his aunt Lady Killowen's house. He found her working at her lacework as usual; she looked up brightly, when he entered. "My dear Sandy, did you ever know such a piece of luck?" she exclaimed.

"As what, aunt?"

"Why, Kathleen and her husband meant to travel by that train. You have heard of the dreadful accident, have you not? But

the O'Grady's were always lucky, and Kathleen the luckiest of them all. She never lost a bet in her life; she never put into a lottery, but she drew the lucky number." And Lady Killowen paused, and looked at Sandy with a twitching about the mouth, that strangely contradicted the smile in her eyes, while she worked on faster than her nephew had ever seen her work. "Now this is the luckiest thing of all; they had quite settled to come by that train, Kathleen wrote to me just before leaving Killowen, but of course they would have reached London long before this, if they had kept to their plans; and then I should have heard."

"Not if they had started by that train, aunt."

"Yes, if they had started by that train. Of course I should," and Lady Killowen's thread broke; she seemed almost angry. "Sandy, you look very lachrymose, are you

come to tell me that you are just starting for Australia? Well, good-bye my dear boy," and she stood up as if she would say good-bye to him then and there.

"I am not going to start at this moment, anyhow," said Sandy, and motioned to Lady Killowen to sit down again. She did so, immediately resuming her work, and going on with it as before, but Sandy noticed that she worked less quickly now, and her needle was not threaded. Doubtless her eyes were too tearful, and her fingers too tremulous for her to perceive this. "I am afraid Kathleen did start by that train, aunt," he continued in a voice, that he vainly strove to steady.

"Nonsense, Sandy; I should have heard long before this, if she had. Kathleen always writes at once."

Sandy was silent, Lady Killowen looked up at him. "You mean she was killed," she said. "Kathleen was killed." Then she let

her work fall upon her lap, and sat there quite still and rigid, as if she had been turned into stone.

Sandy was frightened, he bent over her and kissed her. "Dear aunt," he said, but Lady Killowen pushed him away from her.

"Is her husband dead too?" she asked.

"Yes, both of them; only three people and a guard escaped."

"Don't talk to me," said Lady Killowen, angrily. "What do I care about three people—or a guard?" Then she got up and walked about, but in a few moments she fainted, for the first time in the whole course of her life, and when she recovered it was only to be wildly delirious.

Tom O'Grady arrived that evening, looking terribly worn and shaken. As soon as he had felt compelled to believe the sad intelligence himself, he had thought it his duty to come and break it to his sister-in-

law, but he was relieved to find that Sandy had already taken that task upon himself. Poor Tom O'Grady, he had not yet awoken to the terrible fact that he was his nephew's heir. He remembered his father as Lord Killowen, then his brother, then his nephew, and now he was to be Lord Killowen himself. When he understood this, it seemed to have a more overwhelming effect upon him than all that he had heard before.

"I can't go and live at Killowen. I won't go down to Killowen," he said; "I am an old man now, and I have not long to live, what have I to do with the place? I can't go down there to see all the pretty darling's things strewn about. Sandy, my boy, will you go for me and see all my darling's things put away and the house put straight, and everything arranged as it ought to be. Do it as you would like yourself, for it will be yours soon now. Of course you

are my heir, and after I am gone it will all be yours."

Then Sandy promised readily enough that he would go down to Killowen; indeed, that was the only thing he cared to do now. He went down and wandered about the grand old rooms where he and Kathleen had so often played together as children, and where he had walked with her but a few short days before, and he looked at that portrait of her as a girl, and wondered what she had meant by saying that she owed the misery of her life to it, and hated the portrait for her sake, though he had always loved it hitherto. Then he went upstairs again, and into her boudoir, and sat down where he had sat before, in what he had then judged to be her favourite seat. He sat there for hours, lost in thought, thinking of her life, what it might have been, and what it had been in reality, and perhaps he might have sat there

for hours more, but as he sat thinking he unconsciously took up, one after the other, the little knick-knacks within his reach upon the table. He took up the paper-knife, and pressed its cool blade to his aching brow, and then laid it down again; he took up the letter-weight, and unwarily caught his finger in the coral claw as it closed with a sudden jerk. At last, still unconsciously, he took up Kathleen's little gilt frame containing the photographs of her mother and her husband, and as he played with this he felt a swivel move, and pressing upon this swivel he found he had come upon a secret spring, and the two photographs could now be slid back, and underneath, in the midst of them, appeared a third photograph, a likeness of himself, taken since his return from Australia. How Kathleen had got possession of it he could not think; it had been taken at Lady Faversham's request, and he had given her a copy

—possibly she had afterwards given it to Kathleen, but he did not think much about this now. He sat and looked at the photograph for a little, as if it might possibly change into the likeness of some one else, and he required time to make sure that it was of himself. Then he laid the photograph down, and glanced up at the window with the virginia creeper twining round it, and the clematis still thrusting in that long forlorn trail, which Kathleen had held back while she watched the Faversham carriage drive away such a few short days before, and Sandy recollected how she had looked then, so still, and pale, and ghost-like, with the golden glory round her, and his eyes filled with tears. But this did not prevent his doing what he thought right, and he lit a taper, and watched while that photograph burnt to ashes in his hands. He held it till the flame actually scorched his fingers so as

to leave a mark that remained there for years after. But Sandy did not feel the pain; he held the photograph till there was nothing left to hold, then he walked to the window and leant out as Kathleen leant out but a few short days before.

Barely a month after that railway accident, and Sandy Beaumont had sailed once more for Australia; he only remained in England till Lady Killowen was restored to health again, then he went out to Australia, and looked after his property; but whatever he did, wherever he went, he was always haunted by a phantom. Whether it was in the lonely bush, as he galloped along through the dark night, or, worse still, on moonlight evenings, as he wandered about on foot, or as he sat writing by a lamp in his lonely room, always a woman, with large blue eyes, swimming in tears, and golden hair, that made a halo round her pale face, and long black

velvet drapery, that seemed to trail for ever after her, would stand beside him, rising up from the darkest recesses of the woods, or standing motionless in the moonlight, or, worse still, bending over him as he wrote. The figure never spoke, nor came any nearer, and when Sandy glanced up, he did not see it, but still he knew it was there, and as the years passed, it did not cease to haunt him, but became his habitual companion. Always that beautiful woman, with the blue eyes, and the golden hair, and a look of misery on the pale still face, such a look as he had never seen Kathleen wear, and yet he knew it was Kathleen who stood beside him, and she always looked like that now. Sandy Beaumont grew old and grey before his time in that ghostly companionship, till at last he could bear Australia no longer, but sold his property there and came home, and directly he arrived in England, he wrote to

Norah Murphy, and asked her if she would exorcise this ghost for him. He had always loved Kathleen, she was right, he had not loved herself when he had before asked her to become his wife. But it was many years now since first he had entertained that wish; might it be gratified now? And whether Norah Murphy had grown less proud, or feared a dead rival less than a living one, she wrote and asked him to come over to Ireland and see her, and he went over to Ireland and saw her, and repeated his question, and Norah took his hand, and held it in both hers, and gave him no further answer. But Sandy understood this well enough, and he drew her nearer to him, and would have kissed her, only when Norah felt his arm round her, she hid her face upon his shoulder, and fainted with joy. She had loved him for so many years, all her life long, as it seemed to her, poor little girl!

So she married Sandy Beaumont; but before the wedding arrangements were completed, poor Tom O'Grady had followed the other Lord Killowens, who had gone before him, and Sandy and his bride went to live in the grand old castle. And now that the title is extinct, the spell about the castle seems to be broken also, for the wife of the present owner loves him very dearly, and Sandy finds great comfort in her love, and he is no longer haunted by the beautiful ghost, that had been his companion through so many weary days and restless nights. He could even have borne the daily sight of the picture of Kathleen, young and happy, with her life all before her, to shape it at her pleasure, but he recollected how she had hated it, and so, for her sake, he hated it too, and banished it from the long drawing-room, hung round with pictures of the O'Gradys. Only the children look at it now, when they play hide-

and-seek, in some of the unoccupied rooms of the castle, and one blue-eyed boy is already in love with the beautiful lady, as he calls her, whilst two sweet-faced girls spend many an idle hour in weaving wild romances about her, and wondering why this, the loveliest of all the pictures in the house, is banished to a room so rarely entered.

The Dowager Lady Killowen did no more lacework after her daughter's death. For a time she shut herself up, and would see no one; and though after a year or two she emerged from her retirement and received her friends, and went to see them, just as before, yet she never did her lacework again. And the world called her a hard, worldly woman, and only her nephew, Sandy, knew that she had a heart at all, and that there was nothing in the world this seemingly hard woman would not do for him or his. But she would never see him now. No; he reminded her too much of Kathleen.

Of the other characters connected with this story of two people's lives little remains to be told. They have passed away one by one, and it is too well known to require telling, how carefully the young, widowed Lady Faversham is educating her two children, and how her husband died one spring morning, after only a few days' illness—dying early, like all the Favershams. And when it came to dying himself, he did not shrink back, nor look sorrowful. His face was brighter than Sybil had ever seen it, as he bade her not grieve for him, but live for their children's sake, and do for them all she had ever meant to do, and all he might have done, had he been granted but a few more years of life.

"I should have liked to have lived till Castlemere was grown up," he said; and then he kissed his children, and, holding his wife's hand, fell asleep. A sweet smile played round his lips as he slept, but he

never woke again on earth; and, though Lady Faversham has tried to follow out his parting words, she has grieved for him ever since. But she lives on for the children's sake, and they love their gentle mother very dearly, and she is very thankful for their love.

Though Killowen and Faversham are still as far apart as ever, hardly a day passes now, that some communication does not go between them; and Sybil rejoices as she sees that Sandy has at last gained the quiet happiness she has so long desired for him. But, though she is great friends with him, and great friends with his wife, and though they often talk of old times, and Sybil can bear to speak of the husband who has been taken from her, yet there is one name never mentioned between them. They never speak of Kathleen; yet she is rarely absent from their thoughts.

Kathleen had wished for love; few indeed had been loved more. She had wished for men's hearts as playthings; she had had them. She had wished for wealth and an assured position; these, too, had been hers. But there was no one, who had cared for her, who did not know that there were blessings greater than all these, purer, and more precious, which she had also desired. Had she had these also? Alas! though we may wish it could be so, as the child wishes for the moon, yet we can never gather "figs of thistles, nor grapes of thorns." The seed which we plant, that it is that grows up, and it cannot bear two manner of fruits.

Desire one thing, and we may gain the object of our desire. But, if we have planted tares, let us not expect, when it comes to harvest, that wheat should ripen in our fields. If one wish cannot satisfy our hearts, let us wish several; but take care, then, that they

may be of a like nature—shoots from the same parent stem. Beware of conflicting wishes. "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." We cannot sow to both flesh and Spirit at once.

THE END.

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